Aboriginal Cultural Connections: A Child Protection Resource Guide

Prince Edward Island
CANADA

Community Services and Seniors

Table of Contents

Introduction	**3**
Definitions	4
Mi'kmaq History –Pre Contact Lifestyle	5
Aboriginal Communities and Services	**6**
Aboriginal Community Services	7
Lennox Island First Nation	8
Abegweit First Nation	9
Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI	10
MCPEI Child and Family Services Program	12
MCPEI Health Promotion Program	13
MCPEI Aboriginal Justice Program	14
Mi'kmaq Family Resource Center	15
Aboriginal Head Start Program	16
Native Council of Prince Edward Island	17
Aboriginal Women's Association	18
Mawi'omi: UPEI Aboriginal Student Resource Center	19
Spirituality	**20**
Mi'kmaq Spirituality-Ktlamsitasuti	21
Mi'kmaq Creation Story	23
Traditional Mi'kmaq Spirituality and Roman Catholic Beliefs	30
Spirit Names	33
The Eagle	34
Aboriginal Culture	**35**
Understanding Aboriginal Culture	36
Aboriginal Parenting	37
Six Values of Mi'kmaw People	41
Mi'kmaq Ideologies	42
The Seven Sacred Teachings	44
The Number Four in Creation	46
The Number Seven in Creation	46
The Medicine Wheel	47
Medicines	48
Approaching a Traditional Healer, Elder or Medicine Person	50
Additional Resources	53
Age and Activity Guide	54

Cultural Beliefs and Practices **56**
Powwow 57
Powwow Practices 58
Powwow Etiquette 63
Fasting 64
Smudging 66
Sweat Lodge 67
Talking Circles 69
The Sacred Pipe 71
How a Drum Came To Be 73
Hair Raising . . . A Spiritual Journey 74
Dreamcatchers 79
Mi'kmaq Language **80**
Mi'kmaq Language 81
Wampum Belts 82
Mi'kmaq Alphabet 82
O'Kji Niskam (O Great Spirit) 84
The Lord's Prayer 86
The Eagle Song 87
Mi'kmaq Honor Song 88
Ways to Incorporate Aboriginal Traditions and Language in Your Home 89
Mi'kmaq History **90**
Mi'kmaq Life Prior to European Contact 91
Residential School History 93
Timeline of Residential Schools 95
Shubenacadie Residential School 97
PEI Day Schools 99
The 60's Scoop 102
Band Governance and Identity **103**
The Indian Act 104
Reserves 106
Band Membership and Governance 106
Status 107
Non-Insured Health Benefits 110
Common Acronyms and Abbreviations 111
Mi'kmaq Flags 112
Mi'kmaq Calendar 114
Mi'kmaq Creations 116
Interesting Facts 117
Additional Resources 118

Introduction

This resource guide is the result of collaboration between Child Protection Services, Department of Community Services and Seniors and Prince Edward Island's First Nations. The information is compiled from research and interviews and has been reviewed and approved as representing the general beliefs of the Aboriginal people who live on Prince Edward Island.

This resource guide does not include all aspects of vibrant and interconnected Aboriginal cultures. It is important to keep in mind that culture is individualistic and not everyone lives their lives following all of the traditions that are presented. There is as much variation in beliefs and values regarding culture and traditions as there is variation in people. Families may adopt specific aspects of the culture to fit their belief system and practices.

The guide is intended to be a beginning point for engagement and continued learning.

This resource guide is dedicated to the memory of Child Protection Supervisor, Denyse Butler, for identifying the need and initiating the development of the resource guide and to Child Protection Services, Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI and the Aboriginal community who worked together to make it possible. Special thanks to Emily Ferguson.

Any errors or omissions are not the responsibility of either the Department of Child and Family Services or the Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI.

Definitions:

Cultural awareness: an acknowledgement of cultural differences.

***Cultural sensitivity*:** understanding the consequences of European contact and the inter-generational impact on emotional, physical, mental and spiritual well-being.

Cultural safety: focuses on a service provider's ability to recognize their own cultural bias and assist a client in a manner that promotes individual well-being and does not compromise culture.

Cultural competence: knowing your limitations, local resources and when to draw on the cultural knowledge within the Aboriginal community. This also involves clearly defined policies, programs and interventions that fit the cultural context of the individual, family or community and knowing when and how to refer.

Source:
Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI: A Guide to Build Cultural Awareness

Mi'kmaq History- Pre Contact Lifestyles

Five hundred years ago, the Mi'kmaq way of life was very different from what it is today. The Mi'kmaq called themselves "The People". When meeting the first white men they greeted them by saying "Nigmaq" meaning "kin friends". The white men adopted the term and began calling the people by this name. Over the years the word gradually changed in punctuation and was written "Mi'kmaq".

The Mi'kmaq lived a simple life in harmony with nature. Because plant and animal life was important to their survival, the Mi'kmaq held great respect for them. They considered the plants and animals as "persons" who gave themselves to the people so they could survive. The Mi'kmaq only hunted and gathered enough food to provide a comfortable existence, making use of all parts of the animals they hunted. They made clothing from hides, tools and weapons from bones and oils and fats were used for seasoning. Plants and roots were gathered for food, dyes and medicines.

Our ancestors were very resourceful. They survived by using all the available materials around them. The Mi'kmaq built their wigwams of birch bark and animal hides. They built their first canoes from birch bark, which is a style still in use today. The Mi'kmaw invented snowshoes to allow them to hunt large animals in snow without sinking. The skills needed to make these objects were essential for survival and passed down from one generation to the next.

In Mi'kmaq culture, elders were shown the greatest respect. The Mi'kmaq believed that elders held a special gift; the gift of knowledge, and it was something their culture could not endure without. With age came experience and knowledge of the Mi'kmaq way of life to be passed down to the next generation.

Mi'kmaq celebrations would last for days with feasting, singing, dancing and various competitions. They celebrated weddings, funerals, the birth of a child and a successful hunt. Storytelling was considered most important to celebrations as elders would gather the children and move to a quiet spot capturing their full attention. The elders would teach the children the truths of the world as they saw it through legends, song and games. They would tell stories of the plant relationship between people and the plant and animal persons and why it was important not to misuse them. Stories of the good and bad ways people got along, why there was war and peace. In this way, the children were taught the history, customs and manners of their people, building pride in their history.

Source:
http://www.lennoxisland.com/culture/history/pre-contact-lifestyles/

Aboriginal Communities and Services

Aboriginal Community Services

Abegweit First Nation
P.O. Box 36
Mount Stewart, PE,
C0A 1T0
Phone: 1-902-676-2353

Abegweit Wellness Center
P.O. Box 68
Mount Stewart, PE,
C0A 1T0
Phone: 1-902-676-3007

Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat
Department of Health and Wellness, Government of PEI
105 Rochford Street
Shaw Building, 4th Floor North
PO Box 2000, Charlottetown,
PE C1A 7N8
Phone: 1-902-368-5378
Fax: 1-902-368-4224

Aboriginal Case Worker
Community and Correctional Services
Justice and Public Safety
124 Murchison Lane
Charlottetown, PEI
C1A 7N5
Phone: 1-902-569-7765

Aboriginal Women's Association
P.O. Box 145
Lennox Island, PE,
C0B 1P0
Phone: 1-902-831-3059

Chief Mary Bernard Memorial Women's Shelter
121 Eagle Feather Trail
Lennox Island, PE,
C0B 1P0
Phone: 1-902-831-2332

Lennox Island Dev. Corporation
P.O. Box 134,
Lennox Island, PE,
C0B 1P0
Phone: 1-902-831-2749

Lennox Island First Nation
P.O. Box 134
Lennox Island, PE,
C0B 1P0
Phone: 1-902-831-2779 or
1-902-831-2493

Lennox Island Health
P.O. Box 134
Lennox Island, PE
Phone: 1-902-831-2711

MCPEI Summerside Office
200 Read Drive
Summerside, PE,
C1N 5N7
Phone: 1-902-436-5101
mail@mcpei.ca

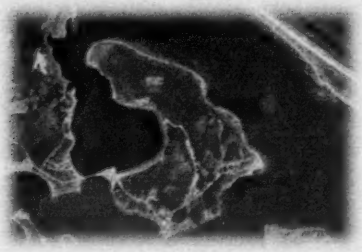
MCPEI Charlottetown Office
Polyclinic Professional Center,
Suite 501,
199 Grafton Street,
Charlottetown, PE,
C1A 7K4
Phone: 1-902-626-2882

Mi'kmaq Family Resource Center
158 St. Peter's Road,
Charlottetown, PE,
C1A 5P8
Phone: 1-902-892-0928
mfrc@pei.aibn.com

Native Council of PEI
6FJ McAulay Court,
Charlottetown, PE,
C1A 9M7
Phone: 1-902-892-5314

U.P.E.I. Mawi'omi Aboriginal Student Center
506 Dalton Hall, UPEI
550 University Avenue,
Charlottetown, PE,
C1A 4P3
mawoimi@upei.c

Lennox Island First Nation



Creation of Lennox Island Reserve:

In 1764-1766, Capt Samuel Holland was tasked with surveying Prince Edward Island. He divided the land into 67 Lots, but some of the islands off the coast of PEI including Lennox Island, were not attached to the lots. Also, the Acadians and Mi'kmaq living on PEI were not consulted. In 1772, Lennox Island was attached to Lot 12 and given to James Montgomery, who allowed the Mi'kmaq to live there.

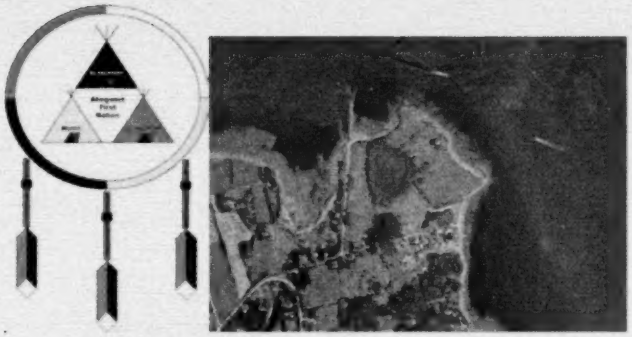
By 1800, it was realized there was no land left for the Mi'kmaq to continue their traditional way of life. The year 1808, brought about a petition from the "Indians, inhabitants of Lennox Island" to the PEI government requesting them to purchase Lennox Island for them. Thirty years would pass, and then a petition was sent from Chief Thomas Labobe of the Micmac Tribe of Indians to the Queen and the PEI Legislature, not so subtly reminding them of their former, and better, association with French. This spurred a flurry of activity in the 1840's, as several areas of land were suggested and discarded. David Stewart, owner of Lennox Island, was approached to sell the island to the PEI government for the Mi'kmaq, but he asked for far too much money for the small area of land.

In the 1860's, Indian Commissioner Theophilus Stewart urged PEI government for more land, a place for "Indians who have no land to call their own," but received only negative replies. In desperation, Stewart approached the Aborigines Protection Society in London, England to purchase Lennox Island for the Mi'kmaq. Struck with the idea, the Society immediately began a subscription to raise money to purchase the island. It was eventually purchased in 1870 by the Society for the "use of the Aboriginal Population of Prince Edward Island," for £400. The title to the land would be held by a board of trustees, one of whom was PEI Indian Commissioner, Theophilus Stewart.

In 1873, PEI joined Confederation, and responsibility for the Mi'kmaq of PEI was transferred to Ottawa. Stewart was appointed Visiting Superintendent in charge of the Mi'kmaq of PEI for the federal government. Lennox Island also gained the title of "Special Reserve" and fell under the direction of Ottawa, as well.
By 1912, the trustees for Lennox Island have either died or are very elderly. The land reverted to the Crown (King George V) and became known as an "Ordinary Reserve." This designation was made official by an Order-in-Council in 06 October, 1970.

Source:
Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI

Abegweit First Nation



Creation of Abegweit First Nation:

Abegweit First Nation was created as a response to a conflict concerning the Council of the Lennox Island First Nation. The distance from Rocky Point, Scotchfort, and Morell Reserves, to Lennox Island also played a significant factor in this, as members of these communities were not always able to attend Band functions or meetings. As well, there was a significant lack of communication between the Lennox Island Band Council and other members of the Band. This led the Scotchfort and Morell Reserves to consider creating a separate band so they could "have their own Council and conduct their own affairs."

The matter was put to a vote, and on a stormy day in March, (7th), 1972, the majority of those who were able to attend the voting, voted overwhelmingly in favour of the separation. It was agreed that Lennox Island Band "would retain Lennox Island Reserve #1." Morell Reserve #2, Rocky Point Reserve #3, and Scotchfort Reserve #4 would form the new Abegweit Band.

The first election for the Abegweit First Nation occurred in May of that year, with Mrs. Margaret Bernard becoming the first Abegweit Chief, with Councillors Joe Jadis and Cyrus Sark also being elected on that day, 17 May 1972.

Source:
Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI

Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI

Mi'kmaq
Confederacy of
Prince Edward Island

An old Mi'kmaq story describes how Glooscap, a Mi'kmaq creation figure, carefully and thoughtfully placed the territory of Epekwitk on the gentle laughing waters of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Glooscap then slept on a sandy beach, waking years later with a strong conviction to protect the integrity of this serene island. He then devoted his time on earth to this task.

The story of Glooscap's creation is symbolic of the modern day efforts, realized in the creation of the Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI, to continue protecting the territorial integrity of Epekwitk. The Mi'kmaq occupation of Epekwitk, known today as the province of Prince Edward Island, dates back thousands of years.

Since the inception of the Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI in April 2, 2002, MCPEI's mission is to strengthen the Mi'kmaq people of PEI by: promoting knowledge and understanding of Mi'kmaw rights, culture and traditions; providing a common forum for PEI First Nations to advance Treaty and Aboriginal rights; developing capacity within First Nation communities; and working collaboratively with other government and community organizations dedicated to supporting the well-being of Mi'kmaq people.

MCPEI is ruled by the following mandate:

- **Aboriginal and Treaty Rights Forum** - MCPEI is the common forum and united voice for the advancement of Treaty and Aboriginal rights for the Lennox Island and Abegweit First Nations.
- **Tribal Council** - as a Tribal Council MCPEI provides advisory services to member First Nation Councils in five key areas: Band governance, community planning, financial, economic development and technical services.
- **PTO (Provincial Territorial Organization)** - as a PTO MCPEI serves as a provincial forum for the Lennox Island and Abegweit First Nations on political and policy issues.
- **Programs and Services** - MCPEI currently delivers a wide range of programs and services, some of which serve the entire PEI Aboriginal population. These include Aboriginal Justice, Aboriginal Skills Employment Training Strategy (ASETS), Health, Aboriginal Sports Circle,

Education, Child and Family Services, Integrated Resource Management, MCPEI-Parks Canada Joint Project, and Event Planning.

The head office is located on Lennox Island. Employees deliver programs and services throughout Prince Edward Island and are located in offices in Summerside, Charlottetown, Scotchfort and Rocky Point.

Source:
Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI

MCPEI Child and Family Services Program

The MCPEI Child and Family Services Program provides prevention services and supports the protection of Lennox Island and Abegweit First Nation children.

There are two components to the MCPEI Child and Family Services Program:

- Designated Representative of the Band as per the Child Protection Act
- PRIDE Program- Prevention focused for children, youth and families living on reserve

Designated Band Representative, the PEI Child Protection Act legislates that when an Aboriginal child is the subject of child protection involvement the Designated Representative of the Band, to which the child identifies with, is provided with notice of the child protection involvement. The Designated Band Representative for both Lennox Island and Abegweit First Nation is the Director of the MCPEI Child and Family Services Program.

Pivotal to the development of the Mi'kmaq Child and Family Services Program is the belief that children, families and communities benefit most from services that are sensitive to, and congruent with, their cultural beliefs and traditional values. Accordingly, the underlying philosophy of the Mi'kmaq Family PRIDE **(Prevention, Respect, Intervention, Development and Education)** Program is:

To provide a holistic and culturally sensitive approach to individual, family and community wellness, and risk reduction through prevention services and protection support.

The MCPEI Child and Family Services Program works collaboratively with First Nation, provincial, federal and non-governmental service providers.

Source:
http://www.mcpei.ca/FamilyPRIDE

MCPEI Health Promotion Program

The Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI (MCPEI) manages an extensive health program designed to support the health and wellbeing of the Mi'kmaq of Prince Edward Island (Lennox Island and Abegweit Band members) living on-reserve. The objectives of the Health Program are as follows:

- To improve accessibility to health programs and services for PEI Mi'kmaq people. To increase the capacity of PEI Mi'kmaq people to better manage their health and increase their sense of wellbeing.
- To raise awareness amongst PEI Mi'kmaq people of their rights, and the types of health and wellness programs and services available to them across PEI.
- To increase capacity within Mi'kmaq communities to better manage their own unique health and safety concerns.
- To raise awareness and understanding within relevant federal government divisions, provincial government sectors, and non-governmental organizations of the health and wellness needs of PEI Mi'kmaq people.
- To increase collaboration between MCPEI and relevant federal government divisions, provincial government sectors, non-governmental organizations, and other Aboriginal organizations to better meet the health and wellness needs of PEI Mi'kmaq people.
- To ensure that the needs of PEI Mi'kmaq people are taken into consideration, and reflected in community and provincial health policies, programs, and procedures.

The Health Program currently consists of five program components:

1) Health Services Management
2) Community Health Promotion and Injury/Illness Prevention
3) Cultural Support to Survivors of Indian Residential Schools
4) Health Emergency Management
5) Environmental Contaminants

Source:
http://www.mcpei.ca/Health

MCPEI Aboriginal Justice Program

Overview

The MCPEI Aboriginal Justice Program (AJP) began in 2003 and works to create an environment that allows Aboriginal people to self-administer justice by building a traditional justice system based on holistic community values. The purpose of the program is to develop and maintain a sustainable justice support system for all Aboriginal people involved in the PEI Justice System. The program focuses on the process of helping offenders, victims, and communities get to the root of the issues that led to the crime(s) being committed.

The program enables positive growth and mutual respect in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities in Prince Edward Island. The program improves and strengthens the understanding of each other's uniqueness through both training and cross-cultural sharing. The program has helped build a better future for all Aboriginal people by facilitating ownership, responsibility, accountability, and respect.

Program Aim

The aim of the program is to provide community based alternatives to deal with crime. The program seeks to involve the community in creating dispositions for the offender that satisfy the victim and the community. The outcome is to find a healing plan that does not in itself create the conditions for offenders to fail. Participants in the program will focus on creating conditions that are doable. The process also ensures that proper resources are in place for each condition to be complete.

Objectives

The objectives of the Aboriginal Justice Program are:

1. to provide legal support services to all Aboriginal people living in Prince Edward Island;
2. to communicate with Aboriginal organizations, communities, individuals, identified key stakeholders, and provincial and federal governments for the improvement of the administration of justice for Aboriginal people;
3. to research and develop justice programs which will initiate change for the betterment of all parties;
4. to promote and create justice programs which will meet the changing and growing needs of Aboriginal people living in Prince Edward Island;
5. to develop a network among the First Nations, justice forums and mainstream justice programs; and
6. to decrease the percentage of repeat offences and the number of Aboriginals going through the criminal justice system.

Source: http//www.mcpei.ca/Aboriginal_Justice

Mi'kmaq Family Resource Center (M.F.R.C.)

The Mi'kmaq Family Resource Center (MFRC) is sponsored by the Aboriginal Women's Association of PEI and is funded by the Community Action Program for Children and the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program through the Public Health Agency, in agreement with the Province of PEI. MFRC focuses on providing programs and services for Aboriginal families who live off-reserve. The programs are designed to focus on children, parents and/or communities. Transportation and other resources are available to help get people to attend the programs and services. Pre-registration is recommended for some of the events.

Mi'kmaq Family Resource Center's Guiding Principles are:

~ Children first
~ Strengthen and support families
~ Culturally sensitive programming
~ Respect and confidentiality
~ Equity and accessibility
~ Flexibility
~ Community based partnerships

For more information regarding any of the programs or services offered by the Mi'kmaq Family Resource Center email mfrc@pei.aibn.com or call 1-902-892-0928. The MFRC has a website that you can visit: http://mikmaqfamilyresources.ca/ or a Facebook page that you can use to get updated information on events, programs and activities going on. For the Facebook page send a friend request to 'Mi'kmaq Family Resource Center'.

Source:
http://mikmaqfamilyresources.ca

Aboriginal Head Start Program

The Aboriginal Head Start Program is a program offered through the Mi'kmaq Family Resource Center. It is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the early childhood development of Aboriginal children and supporting their families. It is a way to instill pride in their heritage and to ensure the children are getting a solid foundation before they enter school. It is a pre-school program offered Monday through Thursday mornings to children ages 3-5. The Head Start program is located in Charlottetown at the Sherwood Business Center across from the MFRC and is for children who live off-reserve. Resources such as transportation, snacks, toys, art supplies, books and field trips are provided as part of the program. This program is free of charge to parents who involve their children.

There are six components of the Aboriginal Head Start Program:

1. **Culture and Language:**
   Children develop a positive sense of themselves as Aboriginal people by experiencing cultural activities and teachings.
2. **Education and School Readiness:**
   Children are encouraged to develop lifelong learning skills and are prepared for a successful school experience.
3. **Health Promotion:**
   Traditional teachings and resources support parents to take responsibility for their family's health and well-being.
4. **Nutrition:**
   Both food and nutritional information are provided to enhance the family's awareness of the importance of healthy eating habits to the child's development.
5. **Social Support:**
   Families are made aware of resources and community services available to impact their quality of life and are assisted to seek them out.
6. **Parent and Family Involvement:**
   Parents are empowered to bring forth gifts and further develop as role models for their children and in their communities.

For more information regarding any of the programs or services offered by the Aboriginal Head Start Program email mfrc@pei.aibn.com, visit http://mikmaqfamilyresources.ca/ or call the MFRC at 1-902-892-0928 or the Head Start office at 1-902-393-0669.

Native Council of Prince Edward Island
(N.C.P.E.I.)

The Native Council of PEI is a community of Aboriginal peoples residing on Mi'kmaq traditional ancestral homeland. The NCPEI mandate is to allow maximum participation of all members. It is set up to be democratic and to let as many members as possible
be involved with the decisions at all levels of NCPEI. This organization is a federation made up of three zones corresponding to the counties of PEI. Members can organize smaller units on a local or community basis. These units ensure that all members are represented and will have opportunities to discuss issues and to voice their concerns.

There are numerous programs and services offered at NCPEI. There are specific programs offered to youth and adults, families and community members. Some examples of programs offered at NCPEI are Species At Risk Act, Diabetes Initiative Programs, Employment and Training Program, National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program, Cultural Connections Program and Strengthening Our Spirits Program. For more information regarding each of these programs contact The Native Council of PEI at 1-902-892-5314 or go to the NCPEI website at www.ncpei.com.

If you would like to subscribe to the Gigmanag Messenger call the Native Council office at 1-902-892-5314. This messenger is a quarterly magazine that gives information about Aboriginal communities and affairs as well as information about past, present and upcoming events that are relevant to Aboriginal people on Prince Edward Island.

There are specific programs and services available for Aboriginal youth. Cultural Connections is the main program through NCPEI that supports and provides youth activities.

The Cultural Connections Program provides Aboriginal off-reserve youth with an organized and structured program that promotes holistic living, individual skills and leadership building, healthy lifestyle, cultural practices and community involvement. All of the services and programs are free of charge. Cultural Connections also has information regarding updates for activities and events on facebook. You can get this information by sending a friends request to 'Native Youth on PEI'. You can also email youth@ncpei.com to receive the monthly Native Youth Link which has the months' activities and events schedule.

Source:
http://www.ncpei.xom

Aboriginal Women's Association

The Aboriginal Women's Association of Prince Edward Island is a not-for-profit organization that promotes holistic healing and maintenance of health and well-being of Aboriginal women on PEI. The goal of the Aboriginal Women's Association of Prince Edward Island is to enhance, support and promote the well-being of Aboriginal women through capacity building, focus groups, prevention, awareness and equal opportunities.

The Aboriginal Women's Association operates a number of projects every year to help address relevant issues that women are dealing with on a daily basis. This program also offers youth activities and services available to support youth and help them become more educated and aware of issues and how to face those issues in ways that will promote healthy and strong individuals.

For more information regarding any of the programs or services offered by the Aboriginal Women's Association of PEI call 1-902-831-3059.

Mawi'omi: Aboriginal Student Resource Center at UPEI

The Mawi'omi Student Centre is a centre that invites all Aboriginals attending UPEI to come gather. The centre is a place that students can feel at home. Students are encouraged to come and share the same commonalities with other Aboriginal students.

The word Mawi'omi means "gathering place" in Mi'kmaq. This name was chosen after consulting with Mi'kmaq elders from the community. The idea of having such a physical are on campus is to provide students with support (talking circles), a place to study and relax between classes, and host events/meetings while attending UPEI.

The centre was funded through Aboriginal Health Human Resource Initiative (AHHRI). AHHRI is a funding body designed to promote and recruit Aboriginal students into health careers. The Mawi'omi Aboriginal student centre has opened up the health definition to encompass those in other programs at UPEI. Being as health is a broad definition in Mi'kmaq culture, the idea only compliments the centre.

Support services that the centre offers includes the following:

- Mentoring and tutoring
- Assisting with course selection
- Assisting with registration/university related issues
- Assisting with registration/university related issues
- Assisting with finding funding, employment, volunteer, and other opportunities
- Assisting with finding resources (on or off campus)
- Providing referrals if needed

Aboriginal Student Scholarships

- John J. Sark Memorial Scholarship
- J. Elmer and Elise Hynes Aboriginal Student Achievement Award
- J. Elmer and Elise Hynes Aboriginal Student Achievement Entrance Award

Source:
http://www.upei.ca/studentlife/mawiomi-centre

SPIRITUALITY

Mi'kmaq Spirituality- Ktlamsitasuti

When the early Europeans first encountered the Mi'kmaq they grossly misinterpreted their spiritual beliefs and practices and assumed that because there was no physical evidence of European religious structures, this somehow meant that the Mi'kmaw possessed no form of religion or spiritual ideology. Further, the Europeans perceived the religious practices of the Mi'kmaw people as mere superstitions. when in fact these practices were pursued out of spiritual beliefs based on respect for both the living and the deceased.

Mi'kmaw people, in common with most Aboriginal nations, believed that all life was created by one, all-powerful Being, the ultimate Creator, known as *Kji-Niskam* (Great Spirit). Mi'kmaw spirituality is a philosophy and a way of life that is encompassed in their beliefs, which dictate their actions in their lives on Mother Earth and life in the Spirit World. Respect is the basic element of Mi'kmaw spirituality and the belief that all living things on earth have a spirit (including humans and animals) make it important to show reverence for life. Every aspect of life and death is wholistic and connected, one to the other. This is why when Mi'kmaw people pray it is done in a circle, and when they dance it is in a circle to honour the Creator.

To communicate with his people, the Great Spirit, *Kji-Niskam,* created Mi'kmaw mediators who existed in the community and who possessed extraordinary powers - of foreseeing events, interpreting dreams, and of having the ability to communicate with the environment around them. These individuals were known as *puoinaq* and had the ability to interced in the spirit world. Some traditional items which were significant to these *puoinaq* in their ability to heal and communicate with the spirit world included sweet grass, drums, rattles, etc.

Europeans viewed the Mi'kmaq as having no religious beliefs, and many of the newcomers set out to enlighten the Mi'kmaq on their own perception of religion by converting all Mi'kmaq to the Christian faith. As a sign of good faith and as a symbol of the Mi'kmaw alliance to the French, Grand Chief Membertou and 21 members of his family were baptized in 1610. In 1628 the Mi'kmaq adopted St. Anne as their patron saint, but continued to hold *Mawio'mi* at their

traditional gathering places as a celebration of such. *Mawio'mi*, or gathering, is a time of joy, reflection, remembrance, goodwill, sharing, and an opportunity to connect with the Great Spirit.

Source: http://www.cbu.ca/mrc/culture and Cape Breton University-Mi'kmaw Language, Sprituality & Medicine

Mi'kmaq Creation Story

ONE - GISOOLG

Gisoolg is the Great Spirit Creator who is the one who made everything. The word Gisoolg in Mi'kmaq means " you have been created ". It also means " the one credited for your existence".

The word does not imply gender. Gisoolg is not a He or a She, it is not important whether the Great Spirit is a He or a She.

The Mi'kmaq people do not explain how the Great Spirit came into existence only that Gisoolg is responsible for everything being where it is today. Gisoolg made everything.

TWO - NISGAM

Nisgam is the sun which travels in a circle and owes its existence to Gisoolg. Nisgam is the giver of life. It is also a giver of light and heat.

The Mi'kmaq people believe that Nisgam is responsible for the creation of the people on earth. Nisgam is Gisoolg's helper. The power of Nisgam is held with much respect among the Mi'kKmaq and other aboriginal peoples. Nisgam owes its existence to Gisoolg the Great Spirit Creator.

THREE - OOTSITGAMOO

Ootsitgamoo is the earth or area of land upon which the Mi'kmaq people walk and share its abundant resources with the animals and plants. In the Mi'kmaq language Oetsgitpogooin means "the person or individual who stands upon this surface", or "the one who is given life upon this surface of land". Ootsitgamoo refers to the Mi'kmaq world which encompasses all the area where the Mi'kmaq people can travel or have traveled upon.

Ootsitgamoo was created by Gisoolg and was placed in the center of the circular path of Nisgam, the sun. Nisgam was given the responsibility of watching over the Mi'kmaq world or Ootsitgamoo. Nisgam shines bright light upon Oositgamoo as it passes around and this brings the days and nights.

FOUR - GLOOSCAP

After the Mi'kmaq world was created and after the animals, birds and plants were placed on the surface, Gisoolg caused a bolt of lightning to hit the surface of Ootsitgamoo. This bolt of lightning caused the formation of an image of a human body shaped out of sand. It was Glooscap who was first shaped out of the basic element of the Mi'kmaq world, sand.

Gisoolg unleashed another bolt of lightning which gave life to Glooscap but yet he could not move. He was stuck to the ground only to watch the world go by and Nisgam travel across the sky every day. Glooscap watched the animals, the birds and the plants grow and pass around him. He asked Nisgam to give him freedom to move about the Mi'kmaq world.

While Glooscap was still unable to move, he was lying on his back. His head was facing the direction of the rising sun, east, Oetjgoabaniag or Oetjibanoog. In Mi'kmaq these words mean "where the sun comes up " and "where the summer weather comes from" respectively. His feet were in the direction of the setting sun or Oetgatsenoog. Other Mi'kmaq words for the west are Oeloesenoog, "where the sun settles into a hollow" or Etgesnoog "where the cold winds come from". Glooscap's right hand was pointed in the direction of the north or Oatnoog. His left hand was in the direction of the south or Opgoetasnoog. So it was the third big blast of lightening that caused Glooscap to become free and to be able to stand on the surface of the earth.

After Glooscap stood up on his feet, he turned around in a full circle seven times. He then looked toward the sky and gave thanks to Gisoolg for giving him life. He looked down to the earth or the ground and gave thanks to Ootsigamoo for offering its sand for Glooscap's creation. He looked within himself and gave thanks to Nisgam for giving him his soul and spirit.

Glooscap then gave thanks to the four directions east, north, west and south. In all he gave his heartfelt thanks to the seven directions.

Glooscap then traveled to the direction of the setting sun until he came to the ocean. He then went south until the land narrowed and he came to the ocean. He then went south until the land narrowed and he could see two oceans on either side. He again traveled back to where he started from and continued towards the north to the land of ice and snow. Later he came back to the east where he decided to stay. It is where he came into existence. He again watched the animals, the birds and the plants. He watched the water and the sky. Gisoolg taught him to watch and learn about the world. Glooscap watched but he could not disturb the world around him. He finally asked Gisoolg and Nisgam, what was the purpose of his existence. He was told that he would meet someone soon.

FIVE - NOGAMI

One day when Glooscap was traveling in the east he came upon a very old woman. Glooscap asked the old woman how she arrived to the Mi'kmaq world. The old woman introduced herself as Nogami. She said to Glooscap, "I am your grandmother". Nogami said that she owes her existence to the rock, the dew and Nisgam, the Sun. She went on to explain that on one chilly morning a rock became covered with dew because it was sitting

in a low valley. By midday when the sun was most powerful, the rock got warm and then hot. With the power of Nisgam, the sun, Gisoolg's helper, the rock was given a body of an old woman. This old woman was Nogami, Glooscap's grandmother.

Nogami told Glooscap that she came to the Mi'kmaq world as an old woman, already very wise and knowledgeable. She further explained that Glooscap would gain spiritual strength by listening to and having great respect for his grandmother. Glooscap was so glad for his grandmother's arrival to the Mi'kmaq world he called upon Abistanooj, a marten swimming in the river, to come ashore. Abistanooj did what Glooscap had asked him to do. Abistanooj came to the shore where Glooscap and Nogami were standing. Glooscap asked Abistanooj to give up his life so that he and his grandmother could live. Abistanooj agreed. Nogami then took Abistanooj and quickly snapped his neck. She placed him on the ground. Glooscap for the first time asked Gisoolg to use his power to give life back to Abistanooj because he did not want to be in disfavor with the animals.

Because of marten's sacrifice, Glooscap referred to all the animals as his brothers and sisters from that point on. Nogami added that the animals will always be in the world to provide food, clothing, tools, and shelter. Abistanooj went back to the river and in his place lay another marten. Glooscap and Abistanooj will become friends and brothers forever.

Nogami cleaned the animal to get it ready for eating. She gathered the still hot sparks for the lightening which hit the ground when Glooscap was given life. She placed dry wood over the coals to make a fire. This fire became the Great Spirit Fire and later got to be known as the Great Council Fire.

The first feast of meat was cooked over the Great Fire, or Ekjibuctou. Glooscap relied on his grandmother for her survival, her knowledge and her wisdom. Since Nogami was old and wise, Glooscap learned to respect her for her knowledge. They learned to respect each other for their continued interdependence and continued existence.

SIX - NETAOANSOM

One day when Glooscap and Nogami were walking along in the woods, they came upon a young man. This young man looked very strong because he was tall and physically big. He had grey colored eyes. Glooscap asked the young man his name and how he arrived to the Mi'kmaq world. The young man introduced himself. He told Glooscap that his name was Netaoansom and that he was Glooscap's sister's son. In other words, his nephew. He told Glooscap that he is physically strong and that they could all live comfortably. Netaoansom could run after moose, deer and caribou and bring them down with his bare hands. He was so strong. Netaoansom said that while the east wind was blowing so hard

it caused the waters of the ocean to become rough and foamy. This foam got blown to the shore on the sandy beach and finally rested on the tall grass. This tall grass is sweet grass. Its fragrance was sweet. The sweet grass held onto the foam until Nisgam, the Sun, was high in the midday sky. Nisgam gave Netaoansom spiritual and physical strength in a human body. Gisoolg told Glooscap that if he relied on the strength and power of his nephew he would gain strength and understanding of the world around him.

Glooscap was so glad for his nephew's arrival to the Mi'kmaq world, he called upon the salmon of the rivers and seas to come to shore and give up their lives. The reason for this is that Glooscap, Netoansom and Nogami did not want to kill all the animals for their survival. So in celebration of his nephew's arrival, they all had a feast of fish. They all gave thanks for their existence. They continued to rely on their brothers and sisters of the woods and waters. They relied on each other for their survival.

SEVEN - NEGANOGONIMGOSSEESGO

While Glooscap was sitting near a fire, Nogam was making clothing out of animal hides and Netaoansom was in the woods getting food. A woman came to the fire and sat beside Glooscap. She put her arms around Glooscap and asked "Are you cold my son?" Glooscap was surprised. He stood up and asked the woman who she was and where did she come from. She explained that she was Glooscap's mother. Her name was Neganogonimgooseesgo. Glooscap waited until his grandmother and nephew returned to the fire then he asked his mother to explain how she arrived to the Mi'kmaq world.

Neganogonimgooseesgo said that she was a leaf on a tree which fell to the ground. Morning dew formed on the leaf and glistened while the sun, Nisgam, began its journey towards the midday sky. It was at midday when Nisgam gave life and a human form to Glooscap's mother. The spirit and strength of Nisgam entered into Glooscap's mother.

Glooscap's mother said that she brings all the colors of the world to her children. She also brings strength and understanding: strength to withstand earth's natural forces: and understanding of the Mi'kmaq world; its animals and her children, the Mi'kmaq . She told them that they will need understanding and co-operation so they all can live in peace with one another.

Glooscap was so happy that his mother came into the world and since she came from a leaf, he called upon his nephew to gather nuts, fruits of the plants while Nogami prepared a feast. Glooscap gave thanks to Gisoolg, Nisgam, Ootsitgamoo, Nogami, Netaoansom and Neganogonimgooseesgo. They all had a feast in honour of Glooscap's mother's arrival to the world of the Mi'kmaq's.

The story goes on to say that Glooscap, the man created from the sand of the earth, continued to live with his family for a very long time. He gained spiritual strength by having respect for each member of the family. He listened to his grandmother's wisdom. He relied on his nephew's strength and spiritual power. His mother's love and understanding gave him dignity and respect. Glooscap' s brothers and sisters of the wood and waters gave him the will and the food to survive. Glooscap now learned that mutual respect of his family and the world around him was a key ingredient for basic survival. Glooscap's task was to pass this knowledge to his fellow Mi'kmaq people so that they too could survive in the Mi'kmaq world. This is why Glooscap became a central figure in Mi'kmaq story telling.

One day when Glooscap was talking to Nogami. He told her that soon they would leave his mother and nephew. He told her that they should prepare for that occasion. Nogami began to get all the necessary things ready for a long journey to the North. When everyone was sitting around the Great Fire one evening, Glooscap told his mother and nephew that he and Nogami were going to leave the Mi'kmaq world. He said that they will travel in the direction of the North only to return if the Mi'kmaq people were in danger. Glooscap told his mother and nephew to look after the Great Fire and never to let it go out.

After the passing of seven winters, "elwigneg daasiboongeg", seven sparks will fly from the fire and when they land on the ground seven people will come to life. Seven more sparks will land on the ground and seven more people will come into existence. From these sparks will form seven women and seven men. They will form seven families. These seven families will disperse into seven different directions from the area of the Great Fire. Glooscap said that once the seven families reached their place of destination, they will further divide into seven groups.

Each group will have their own area for their subsistence so they would not disturb the other groups. He instructed his mother that the smaller groups would share the earth's abundance of resources which included animals, plants and fellow humans.

Glooscap told his mother that after the passing of seven winters, each of the seven groups would return to the place of the Great Fire. At the place of the fire all the people will dance, sing and drum in celebration of their continued existence in the Mi'kmaq world. Glooscap continued by saying that the Great Fire signified the power of the Great Spirit Creator, Gisoolg. It also signified the power and strength of the light and heat of Nisgam, the sun. The Great Fire held the strength of Ootsitgamoo the earth. Finally the fire represented the bolt of lightning which hit the earth from which Glooscap was created. The fire is very sacred to Mi'kmaq people. It is the most powerful spirit on earth.

Glooscap told his mother and nephew that it is important for the Mi'kmaq to give honor, respect and thanks to the seven spiritual elements. The fire signifies the first four stages of creation, Gisoolg, Nisgam, Oositgamoo and Glooscap. Fire plays a significant role in the last three stages as it represents the power of the sun, Nisgam.

In honor of Nogamits arrival to the Mi'kmaq world, Glooscap instructed his mother that seven, fourteen and twenty-one rocks would have to be heated over the Great Fire. These heated rocks will be placed inside a wigwam covered with hides of moose and caribou or with mud. The door must face the direction of the rising sun. There should be room for seven men to sit comfortably around a pit dug in the center, where up to twenty-one rocks could be placed. Seven alders, seven wild willows and seven beech saplings will be used to make the frame of the lodge. This lodge should be covered with the hides of moose, caribou, deer or mud.

Seven men representing the seven original families will enter into the lodge. They will give thanks and honor to the seven directions, the seven stages of creation and to continue to live in good health. The men will pour water over the rocks causing steam to rise in the lodge to become very hot. The men will begin to sweat up to point that it will become almost unbearable. Only those who believe in the spiritual strength will be able to withstand the heat. Then they will all come out of the lodge full of steam and shining like new born babies. This is the way they will clean their spirits and should honor Nogami's arrival.

In preparation of the sweat, the seven men will not eat any food for seven days. They will only drink the water of golden roots and bees nectar. Before entering the sweat the seven men will burn the sweet grass. They will honor the seven directions and the seven stages of creation but mostly for Netawansom's arrival to the Mi'kmaq world. The sweet grass must be lit from the Great Fire.

Glooscap's mother came into the world from the leaf of a tree, so in honor of her arrival tobacco made from bark and leaves will be smoked. The tobacco will be smoked in a pipe made from a branch of a tree and a bowl made from stone.

The pipe will be lit from sweet grass which was lit from the Great Fire. The tobacco made from bark, leaves and sweet grass represents Glooscap's grandmother, nephew and mother. The tobacco called "spebaggan" will be smoked and the smoke will be blown in seven directions.

After honoring Nogami's arrival the Mi'kmaq shall have a feast or meal. In honor of Netawansom they will eat fish. The fruits and roots of the trees and plants will be eaten to

honour Glooscap's mother.

Glooscap's final instruction to his mother was about how to collect and prepare medicine from the barks and roots of seven different kinds of plant.

The seven plants together make what is called "ektjimpisun". It will cure mostly every kind of illness in the Mi'kmaq world. The ingredients of this medicine are: "wikpe"(alum willow), "waqwonuminokse"(wild black-cherry), "Kastuk"(ground hemlock), and "kowotmonokse"(red spruce). The Mi'kmaq people are divided into seven distinct areas which are as follows:

1. Gespegiag
2. Sigenitog
3. Epeggoitg a, Pigtog
4. Gespogoitg
5. Segepenegatig
6. Esgigiag
7. Onamagig

Source:
http://www.ilhawaii.net/~stony/lore21.html

Traditional Mi'kmaq Spirituality and Roman Catholic Beliefs

This information is provided to show how similar and different the spiritual beliefs are between traditional Mi'kmaq beliefs and Roman Catholic beliefs. It is to provide a general overview of information regarding spirituality and how this important aspect of life influences how every individual lives. Comparing the differences and similarities can be interesting when beliefs and values are displayed side-by-side. It is important to remember that a number of Mi'kmaq people have adopted the Roman Catholic beliefs as well as continuing to practice their traditional Aboriginal spirituality. Also, not all Mi'kmaq people believe in all of these traditions, many take from both religions and live a happy life practicing all the beliefs and values. Also, not every Roman Catholic believes in all of the information, or practices in the ways described here.

Furthermore, many aspects of Mi'kmaq spirituality is similar to the Catholic faith, so when the Mi'kmaq initially accepted the Catholic faith, they did so thinking they were adopting a similar set of beliefs and values. Much of the difference is surrounding the practices and day to day procedures for worship.

Also, the information being compared is past tense, when there were missionaries and when Mi'kmaq people would live mainly in the 'traditional' ways. This information is not to demonstrate a 'better' religion, but rather to explore the ideals and values of both religions that many Mi'kmaq people live today and the contrasts of what it means to do so.

The Mi'kmaq believed that all nature had been created by a Great Spirit. They also believed that there were other gods who acted as go-between for the Great Spirit with man.

Catholic missionaries worked to convert this Mi'kmaq belief into a belief in the Christian god, Jesus Christ and the saints.

The Mi'kmaq had no one particular ritual or ceremony through which they worshiped the Creator. Mi'kmaq spirituality was inherent in every aspect and action of their lives.

In Roman Catholicism, God was worshiped at specific times through specific ceremonies. Such as mass in a church celebrated by a priest.

Mi'kmaq people believed that all animate and inanimate objects had their own spirit. These spirits had their own powers to bestow favors or to change shapes.

Catholic missionaries considered this a sinful belief.

The Mi'kmaq saw themselves as beings in the chain of living things, not as superior to any other

creature.

In the Roman Catholic religion, people were believed to be superior to the creatures because they alone had a soul.

Mi'kmaq people believed that animals offered themselves as a source of food for the survival of the community.

Missionaries considered this to be a sinful belief, that animals did not consciously do anything.

Because of Mi'kmaq people's beliefs in spirits, they treated (and still do) animal bones carefully and respectfully. When an animal or plant was used for food, thanks were offered for them. It was believed that if that animal's bones were dishonored, the spirit of that animal would let others know in the spirit world and this could cause scarcity of food supply.

Missionaries considered this belief in animal souls and spirits to be heathen and sinful.

Mi'kmaq shamans were in charge of the spiritual, mental and physical health of the community. They had the power to communicate with the spirits. Grand Chief Membertou was believed to have these extraordinary powers. Shamans were usually men, but older women sometimes held the position. Female shamans had skills in midwifery and knowledge of healing herbs, love potions and spells.

The Catholic priest served a similar role, that of communicating with God through prayer and through the sacrifice of mass. His area of responsibility was for the most part, spiritual. Women were not allowed any dominant role in this communication with God. Also, a woman would be considered a witch and forced to recant or be put to death, if she spoke of healing herbs, love potions and spells.

Spirituality played an important role in birth, marriage and death in the Mi'kmaq community.

In the same way, the sacraments of baptism, marriage and anointing of the sick, mark passages and events in the Roman Catholic community.

When youth reached puberty, sexual experimentation was permitted. This activity was discontinued once a promise of marriage had been made between a youth and his prospective bride.

It is against the Catholic church's teaching to have sexual relations before marriage.

To the Mi'kmaq, a child born out of wedlock was seen as a positive sign of the mother's fertility. These children were welcomed into the community and cared for by the maternal grandparents.

In the Catholic community, such children bore the stigma of illegitimacy and were a symbol of the result of relations outside of marriage.

Prior to European contact, Mi'kmaq shamans used traditional items such as sweet grass, drums and rattles in their ceremonies. After contact, the shamans began to incorporate Christian objects such as medals, statues and candles into their rituals. They began to use bowls of water to foretell the future. A shaman might demand that people present at a ceremony reveal their inner-most secrets.

As representatives of the Catholic church, the missionaries used holy water to bless people and objects. They also offered the sacrament of confession to forgive sin and to provide a means of atoning for evil through some form of penance.

Source:
http://hrsbstaff.ednet.ns.ca/ltemplin/mikmaq10/spirituality/spiritualityarticle.pdf

Spirit Names

Spirit names are a common tradition of Mi'kmaq people. They have great significance and can mean many different things. They are a representation of that person's spirit. There are a couple of ways to receive a spirit name. A person can get one from their relative. This can be done at any age. A person can also pray for one by putting Tobacco (as an offering) under their pillow and going to sleep. A dream is thought to provide a spirit name. A person can also get a spirit name by going into a sweat and being named by the sweat keeper.

Once you have your spirit name, it stays with you for life. You don't get to change it. It is a huge honor to receive a spirit name. It is given with a purpose.

Spirit names can be anything representing the Mother Earth, the universe or an animal. Some examples of spirit names are: fox woman and turtle child.

Source: Georgina Knockwood-Crane, Lennox Island First Nation

The Eagle

The Eagle is a sacred bird because of the many things he/she can do for all of creation. The eagle can fly the highest of all birds and it has impeccable vision. It is because of this that people can send their prayers to the Creator. The prayers attach to the eagles feather's and go as high as the eagle can. Thus, allowing the Creator to receive them. Also, the eagle's eyes are a pathway for the Creator to see on earth.

To receive an eagle feather is a great honor. A person must earn an eagle feather. Once a person has received an eagle feather they are beginning a learning journey with it. A person must care for it properly. If proper care is not given to the feather it will be taken by an elder.

Instructions:

Do not drop it.
Clean it by gently placing it over steam, then smudging it.
Store it in red, 100% cotton material when not using it for prayer, dancing or a sweat.
It is disrespectful to throw or to hang your feather.
Sit with it as often as you can.

Source: Methilda Knockwood-Snache, Lennox Island First Nation

ABORIGINAL CULTURE

Understanding Aboriginal Culture

The Canadian constitution recognizes three groups of Aboriginal people: Indians, Métis and Inuit. These are three distinct peoples with unique histories, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs.

"First Nations people" refers to Status and non-status "Indian" peoples in Canada. Many communities also use the term "First Nation" in the name of their community. Currently, there are 617 First Nation communities, which represent more than 50 nations or cultural groups and 50 Aboriginal languages.

Inuit are the Aboriginal people of Arctic Canada. About 45,000 Inuit live in 53 communities in: Nunatsiavut (Labrador); Nunavik (Quebec); Nunavut; and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region of the Northwest Territories. Each of these four Inuit groups have settled land claims. These Inuit regions cover one-third of Canada's land mass.

The word "Inuit" means "the people" in the Inuit language called, Inuktitut and is the term by which Inuit refer to themselves. The term "Eskimo," applied to Inuit by European explorers, is no longer used in Canada.

The Métis emerged as a distinct people or nation in the historic Northwest during the course of the 18th and 19th centuries. This area is known as the "historic Métis Nation Homeland," which includes the 3 Prairie Provinces and extends into Ontario, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories and the northern United States. This historic Métis Nation had recognized Aboriginal title, which the Government of Canada attempted to extinguish through the issuance of "scrip" and land grants in the late 19th and 20th centuries.

The Métis National Council consequently adopted the following definition of "Métis" in 2002:

"Métis" means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry and who is accepted by the Métis Nation."

Source:
Metis National Council http://www.metisnation.ca/index.php/who-are-the-metis/citizenship
Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/

Aboriginal Parenting

The reality of parenting in today's world for Aboriginal people is that the mainstream society often differs from traditional and cultural Aboriginal thinking. It seems that many Aboriginal parents are struggling between the two different cultures. The values and beliefs are sometimes similar and different, and the differences at times can be very challenging to the family, community and culture. The concept of living in two worlds is a reality to many Aboriginal families and communities. The challenge is often balancing the two. The Aboriginal world view often stresses reverence for the spiritual, physical, emotional, and mental connections with family, community, ancestors, future generations, nature and the interconnectedness of all things.

The western world view often emphasizes individuality, reliance of experts and diagnoses, a future orientation and the nuclear family.

There is no right or wrong way to look at the world and the goal of this information is to recognize that having more than one world view is a reality of many, especially when working with individuals of a different culture. Traditional parenting practices emerge from the culture of a group of people who share history, blood ties, knowledge of territory and values and who want to pass these values on to the children.

Aboriginal people have a very holistic teaching and learning process. They encompass all aspects of the person and their environment. It is believed that a person is made up of four parts: the spirit, the mind, the heart(emotion) and the body. These four parts help the person see, know, feel and do. The person then must find balance with their interactions in the environment. An accepted teaching, is that everyone is continually learning, there is no end to the teachings and they continue throughout the life cycle.

Traditional values are very important to Aboriginal people. The values and beliefs are generally taught to the children throughout the life span and in ways that the child is able to connect their behavior to the experience. The seven sacred teachings represent the values that Aboriginal people hold. Love, respect, courage, honesty, humility, truth and wisdom are the values that are at the center of life and understanding. Understanding the traditional values helps to maintain

order and respect at all levels of society and within the universe. Even before the introduction of European court systems, Aboriginal people had their own systems of education, religion, justice and law that governed all aspects of social behavior. The role of Elders, family and community were known and everyone had responsibilities. Everything was shared in the Aboriginal community. No one went without eating, shelter or clothing. Everyone was cared for and every person shared without thought. Many of these values are still seen among many Aboriginal communities today.

When a person did commit an offense, their behavior was corrected not punished. Elders had good observation skills and could tell if someone had burdens. It was common for people to talk openly about their issues and seek help, if needed. There was no such thing as stigma. The interventions were very nonintrusive and any advice given was often done in nonspecific, nonjudgmental and non-consequential way. For example, advice was given through a story and the person receiving it would come to their own conclusion about what should be done, with the guidance from the story. It was not customary to tell someone what to do, but offer solutions to problems and allow that person to choose. This influenced and encouraged empowerment instead of feelings of incompetency.

Traditional Aboriginal family dynamics and roles were much different from European families. The family unit was a collection of extended family and community members. The saying 'It takes a community to raise a child' is what Aboriginal people lived by. All adults had the responsibility to ensure all children were safe, healthy and in a nurturing environment. Elders held roles of sharing history, values and traditions through storytelling and demonstration. Older children and 'teenagers' were responsible for younger children and showing proper ways of acting through role modeling. The grandparents of the children often taught the child the values of sharing and compassion. All actions within child rearing had the purpose of influencing the child to consider themselves an important part of a whole unit and that everyone and everything is connected.

This is sometimes hard for non-Aboriginal people to understand. However, many of these familial values, dynamics and roles are still a very accepted practice today in Aboriginal communities.

Children have always been at the center of the circle of life in Aboriginal values and beliefs. A strong belief is that children do not belong to parents but they are gifts from the Creator to be cherished, respected and nurtured into respectful beings that are aware of all aspects of life, as Aboriginal believe and know. There was no such thing as abuse against children or women. Children are the future and women are the carriers of the future. Violence was not condoned in any Aboriginal community. Some ways to correct undesirable behavior are to tease, model good behavior, ignoring undesirable behavior, tell stories to instruct or to discuss issues directly.

Adoption was a common practice in Aboriginal societies. If the biological parents were unable to care for the child(due to sickness or death), other families would help care for the child or adopt them. The community and the extended family would also care for the child, however the main attachments would be to both the biological and the adoptive parents and their families.
The following chart demonstrates the differences in world view concepts between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people.

	Aboriginal	Non Aboriginal
Knowledge	Believe their ancestors are mostly right and thus value the preservation and use of ancestral knowledge.	Contemporary or futuristic knowledge is valued over ancestral knowledge.
Time	Believe in expansive concepts of time that reach back and forward in time. For example, all decisions made should consider the impacts on '7 generations' of children to come. Also, often 'spirit' seeking ceremonies are performed to get advice from generations that have passed.	Time is often limited to three generations. That of the living, their off-spring and their grandchildren. There is little or no attempt to seek guidance from previous generations.
Connection	Believe they are part of the natural world order and are interconnected across time to those who came before and those who are yet to come. There is also a connection to nature, spirits and the universe.	Believe that humans are a part of the natural world and do not perceive a fundamental interconnection to the past or future(with exception of living family members or near future grandchildren).
Health	Believe that in order for a person, family or community to be healthy they must have balance between all of the physical, emotional, cognitive and mental aspects of health. All of these aspects of health are interconnected and thus any 'treatment' received must fully consider the whole person and community.	Believe that health care can be separated into specialized functions. Services to non-Aboriginal peoples tend to distinguish between services for physical health and mental wellbeing with little interconnection between the two. Although there is a commitment to interdisciplinary health practice, the practical reality is that people get treated one piece at a time.
Place in the World	View themselves as a link in a long chain of people who have come before and those who will follow. In this context, you are special to	Believe in individual as opposed to collective rights and give primacy to the generation that currently exists with limited attention to the sustainability of

	the extent that you live in a good way and pass along the information and values necessary to sustain your group across time.	their groups over time.
Culture	Deeply value the knowledge gained by generations living across millennia and is transmitted as oral history. It contains a rich and varied knowledge of the experience of people on such topics as politics, law, caring for children, architecture, astrology, pharmaceuticals and ecology. Its integrity is maintained and passed to the next generation, it evolves over time with the belief that good ideas remain true across generation and bad ideas have either immediate or long term negative consequences that put the community or Mother Earth off balance.	New expert knowledge is most highly valued. Life history is considered important in understanding health issues but little consideration is given to ancestral knowledge or the overall history of cultural groups. Although professionals typically value cultural diversity, the health system itself is embedded in western cultural norms and it often erroneously assumes a cultural neutrality that applies across all cultures.

Source:
Bringing Tradition Home: Aboriginal Parenting in Today's World: Facilitator's Guide. 2010, BC Aboriginal Child Care Society. www.acc-society.bc.cafiles_2/bringing-tradition_home.php

Blackstock, C. (2008). Rooting mental health in an Aboriginal world view. Inspired by many hands on dream. Ottawa, ON: The Provincial Center of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health at CHEO. www.excellenceForchildandyouth.cd/sites/default/files/position-aboriginal-world-view.pdf

Six Values of Mi'kmaw People

Peace
Every person has their own path. People walk side by side each other in peace. Peace among nations is believed to occur when everyone unites in traditional ways.

Strong Defense
There is a unity of vigilance and strength against those who want to destroy creation. Defense of the people, mother earth, animals are very important.

Vision
It is believed that who Aboriginal people are and why they are on earth is answered by the creator. They turn to him/her for guidance, and to give answers to what paths should be taken. The creators' vision in Aboriginal lives is sought and valued.

Respect
Each person's spirit speaks in its own ways. It is not for one person to tell another what they should or should not do. As each person works hard to keep the cycles of creation moving, they respect ways and ideas that are different.

Harmony
To be in harmony with the natural world, one must live within the cycles of life. It is believed that human spirits and those of the birds, bears, insects, plants, mountains, clouds, stars and sun must be in communications with each other.

Sharing
The creator shares with all its creatures, giving people the privilege of sharing with others. Since nothing is really owned, passing along the creators gifts to those who may need them is valued.

Source: Doris Googoo, Eskasoni First Nation

Mi'kmaq Ideologies

Most of the following ideologies are still practiced within many Mi'kmaq communities. These are a set of understandings rather than rules and most people value and display them within their daily routine.

Respect:
Respect for elders is one of the main ideologies that is accepted throughout all native communities. It is very important and is a high priority. Respect also extends to the rest of the world in caring for animals, plants, other people etc.

Non-interference:
This concept is one of the hardest for non-Aboriginal people to understand. This involves not advising, persuading or ordering someone to do something. In Mi'kmaq society it is considered rude and judgmental to tell someone else how to do something or how to behave.

The acceptable way to guide desired behaviors is to tell stories of someone in similar situations and give examples of different types of consequences and what that was like for them. Then let the person decide on their own what course they would like to take. In Mi'kmaq communities, before colonization, children were taught by everyone in the community how to act and what behaviors were acceptable.

Anger must not be shown:
It is considered rude to show anger in any setting and is unacceptable to display this emotion in public.

Everything is to be shared:
Traditionally the Mi'kmaq people lived in a communal setting where all resources were shared among the people so that everyone could survive the harsh environments. Success and achievements were and still are today celebrated throughout the community.

Concept of Time:
Mi'kmaq peoples' sense of time stems from their beliefs in that everything will happen when the time is right and meant to happen. This usually occurs when they have completed something else that they have started.

Gratitude:
This is another concept that may be difficult for non-Aboriginal people to understand. Praise and gratitude are not given to people for their jobs. There is an understanding that you have that job

because you are good at what you do and you do it well. An historical example would be a hunter. He is expected to hunt and provide for his community. He is not given praise when he brings back a large animal for everyone to feast upon. This is the same with other jobs in the community. Praise and gratitude are thought to be celebrated at the end of life.

Protocol:
Protocol is very important in many communities. They range from Pow Wow protocols to medicines. It is pertinent that you follow the communities protocol when working with Aboriginal people. It can make or break interactions with people in the community and shows the level of respect one has for the members of that community. Today's communities blend traditional and new customs, beliefs, manners and rules, if you are not sure about something then you need to ask.

Non-confrontational:
Most Mi'kmaq people do not like confrontational actions and will usually withdraw when insulted or offended. Mi'kmaq people are peaceful.

Eye contact and Silences:
On Prince Edward Island, eye contact is acceptable, however in general it may be perceived as rude and challenging. This depends on the Aboriginal person's customs and traditions. Do not be surprised if direct eye contact is not made during a conversation. It is a sign of respect. Silences also depend on the customs of a person. Generally, silences in conversation are due to a person thinking before they speak. This is important to decrease the misunderstandings that can occur.

Source: Alma MacDougall, Abegweit First Nation

The Seven Sacred Teachings

The traditional concepts of respect and sharing that form the foundation of Aboriginal way of life are built around the seven natural laws, or sacred teachings. Each teaching honors one of the basic virtues intrinsic to a full and healthy life. Each law is embodied by an animal to underscore the point that all actions and decisions made by man are manifest on a physical plain. The animal world taught man how to live close to the earth and the connection that has been established between the animal world and that of man has instilled a respect for all life in those who follow the traditional Aboriginal way.

It is important to understand that these teachings are practiced in everyday life. Parents, Elders and community teach children by example. It is through these teachings children grow to live by the seven sacred teachings. It is not enough to read the teachings. Children learn the importance of the teachings through the relationships they have with others who live by them every day.

Love

To feel true love is to know the Creator. It is expected that one's first love is to be for the Great Spirit/the Creator. He is considered the father of all children and the giver of human life. Love given to the Great Spirit is expressed though love of oneself and it is understood that if one cannot love oneself it is impossible to love another. Love is said to be a very pure and powerful medicine but it can be very elusive as it depends upon a world that acknowledges the importance of spirituality.

The Eagle was chosen by the Great Spirit to represent this law because it is the eagle that can reach the highest above the earth. It can bring pure vision to the seeker. The eagle is the most sacred creature to the Mi'kmaq people.

Respect

Native people believed themselves to be true caretakers of the great herds and developed a sustainable relationship with the Buffalo resulting in a relationship that was a true expression of respect. The Buffalo, through giving its life and sharing every part of its being, showed the deep respect it had for the people. No animal was more important to the existence of Aboriginal families than this animal. It provided shelter, clothing and utensils for daily living.

Courage

The Bear provides many lessons in the way it lives, but courage is the most important teaching it offers. Though gentle by nature, the ferociousness of a mother Bear when one of her cubs is approached is the true definition of courage. To have the mental and moral strength to overcome fears that prevent us from living our true spirit as human beings is a great challenge that must be met with the same vigor and intensity as a mother Bear protecting her cub. Living of the heart

and of the spirit is difficult but the Bear's example shows us how to face any danger and how to achieve these goals.

Honesty

Long ago, there was a giand called Kitch-Sabe. Kitch-sabe walked among the people to remind them to be honest to the laws of the Creator and honest to each other. The highest honour that could be bestowed upon an individual was the saying "There walks an honest man. He can be trusted." To be truly honest was to keep promises one made to the Creator, to others and to oneself. The Elders would say, "Never try to be someone else; live true to your spirit, be honest to yourself and accept who you are the way the Creator made you." The animal that represents this teaching now, is the Sabe.

Humility

Recognizing and acknowledging that there is a higher power than man, known as the Creator, is to be truly humble. To express deference of submission to the Creator through the acceptance that all beings are equal, is to capture the spirit of humility. The expression of this humility is manifested through the consideration of others before oneself. In this way, the Wolf became the teacher of this lesson. He bows his head in the presence of others out of deference, and once hunted, will not take of the food until it can be shared with the entire pack. His lack of arrogance and his respect for his community is a hard lesson, but integral in the Aboriginal way.

Truth

To know truth is to know and understand all of the original laws as given by the Creator- and to remain faithful to them. It is said that in the beginning, when the Creator made man and gave him the seven sacred teachings the Grandmother Turtle was present to ensure that these teachings would never be lost or forgotten. On the back of the Turtle are the 13 moons, each representing the truth of one cycle of the Earths' rotations around the sun. The 28 markings on her back represent the cycle of the moon and of a woman's body. The shell of the Turtle represents the body of events as created by the Higher Power, and serves as a reminder of the Creator's will and teachings.

Wisdom

This is the very last teaching that one can learn. The building of a community is entirely dependent on gifts given to each member by the Creator and how these gifts are used. The Beavers' example of using his sharp teeth for cutting trees and branches to build his dams and lodges expresses this teaching. If he did not use his teeth, the teeth would continue to grow until they became useless, and ultimately making it impossible for him to sustain himself. The same can be said for human beings. One's spirit will grow weak if not fulfilling its use. When used properly, however, these gifts contribute to the development of a peaceful and healthy community.

Source: http://www.thesharingcircle.com/sacred_teachings.html

The Number Four in Creation

In all of creation, there are four parts to everything that is natural. There are four parts to the morning, four parts to the afternoon, four parts to the evening and four parts to the night. There are four directions; North, East, South and West. There are four main colors; Red, Black, Yellow and White. There are four elements: Water, Air, Fire and Earth. There are four sacred medicines: Sweetgrass, Sage, Cedar and Tobacco. There are four seasons: Summer, Spring, Winter and Fall. There are four main life stages; Infant, Child, Adult and Elder. There are four stages of spirit life: before birth, birth/life, life/death and after death. There are four parts to the person: the mind, body, spirit and heart.

Just as in creation, all things are connected but have different functions. Everything is part of the sacred circle of life and everything is connected. When something falls out of balance, it affects everything else. There needs to be harmony and balance in us just as there must be in the world we live in.

The Number Seven in Creation

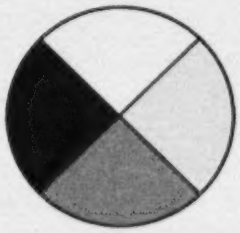
The number seven is very important as well. There are seven sacred teachings that Aboriginal people live by. They are love, respect, courage, honesty, humility, truth and wisdom. These teachings are taught throughout the life cycle.

Aboriginal people also recognized seven as being the number of which they began. In the creation story, there are seven sparks of fire that leave the sacred fire and when these hit the ground seven women will be created. Seven more sparks leave the fire and when they hit the ground they will make up seven men. Together these men and women come together to form the first seven families. They will go in separate directions and began life in different parts of the world. During a sweat there are seven rocks put in the middle of the circle. These are to represent the seven families and give thanks for their survival and ask for forgiveness.

There are seven directions that Aboriginal people recognize and pray to. They are East, South, West, North, Father sky, Mother Earth and the spirit within. These directions are shown respect though offerings or by prayer.

Source : Anishnawbe Health Toronto Pamphlets http://www.aht.ca/traditional-teachings

The Medicine Wheel



The medicine wheel is a very powerful symbol of native spirituality for many reasons. It is a circle and therefore it represents the many cycles that appear in the natural world. Some of which are; the cycle of night and day, the seasons and the cycle of life (birth, life, death). It is important to note that each nation has been given its own understanding of the medicine wheel, the colors, order and other details. That does not mean that any one understanding is right or wrong but that each nation has received teachings that work best for them. The medicine wheel represents wholeness and teaching which depend on the beliefs and practices of the person. Its concept is used for teaching how to live a balanced lifestyle which shows respects to the creator and all creations at all times.

The medicine wheel represents four directions. The four directions that are represented are North, East, South and West. There are seven directions in total. The three that are not represented in the medicine wheel are: up, down and inward. The direction up, refers to the direction of the creator, the sky, grandfather sun and grandmother moon. The direction down, refers to mother earth. The direction inward, refers to honoring ourselves and the spirit that exists within each person. The circle represents the passage of the sun and the seasons, discussions of the wheel usually starts in the East direction, where the sun rises and travels in a clockwise direction. This applies to ceremony circles as well. The East is seen as the direction of beginnings, including infancy (the beginning of life) and spring (the beginning of a new year). The West is seen as a direction of endings. The colors of the medicine wheel also represent the color of the people that originated in that direction. The color red was for the Aboriginal people, the color white was for white people, the color black for black people and the color yellow for Asian people.

Direction	Color	Guide	Medicine	Element	Season	Life Stage
East	White	Eagle	Sweet grass	Air	Spring	Infancy
South	Black	Wolf	Sage	Fire	Summer	Adolescence
West	Red	Black bear	Cedar	Earth	Fall	Adulthood
North	Yellow	White bear	Tobacco	Water	Winter	Elder

Source:
http://www.muiniskw.org/pgCulture2.htm
Native Council of PEI: Powwow Information Guide and Color Book

Medicines

The term, medicine, as it applies to Aboriginal traditions and culture, tends to be a bit misleading. Its' origin is actually a misunderstanding of the word 'Midewiwin' (Mih-day-i-win), the name for the Grand Medicine Society of the Anishinabe. This word, derived from the misunderstanding, refers to traditional healing herbs and to many aspects of spiritual practices. The term 'Medicine Man' is a term referring to someone who is knowledgeable about traditional herbal remedies and who can and does carry out spiritual ceremonies. Medicines are considered to be sacred and must be shown respect at all times. When medicine is burned, it is thought to be the prayers of the burner, to the creator. When they are sprinkled about a particular place, it is for protection.

About the Medicines:

There are four sacred medicines that are used for ceremonial purposes, tobacco, sage, cedar and sweet grass. Tobacco should sit at the eastern door, sweet grass in the southern door, sage in the west and cedar in the north. In general, these medicines are used for purification purposes prior to the ceremony or for daily spiritual cleansing. There is a ceremony referred to as 'smudging', to do this. Smudging involves burning the medicine to produce a smoke and then using the smoke to cleans the head, heart, body and soul of any negativity. During the smudge, the smoke is believed to carry away the negativity. Many medicines can be used as offerings as well. In the Aboriginal culture, an offering is provided any time someone is looking for something from another person or in thanks for a service provided. The services can be anything intangible such as; advice, a song, a thought and/or anything tangible such as; mowing the yard for someone.

Medicines:

1. Sweet grass: (Hierochloe odorata or vanilla grass) is often used for smudging. It grows in the wild all over North America and it is one of the most common medicines. When it is burned, it produces a sweet scent similar to incense. It is believed that this scent is attractive and inviting to spirits of good will. It is used in healing circles because it has a calming effect. Sweet grass is most often available in braids because it is thought of as the 'hair of mother earth'. The sweet aroma reminds people of mother earths' love, gentleness and kindness that she has for them.

2. Sage: (salvia apiana) is often used for smudging and to prepare for ceremonies and teachings. It produces a very pungent smoke that is believed to ward off spirits who intend harm. It is typically used for purifying people, places or things and to provide protection. Placing crumbled sage in area such as a home, is another way of ensuring protection. There is male and female sage and should be used by that particular gender accordingly.

3. Cedar: is often used for cleansing and energizing. It is used to line the floors of sweat lodges and can be combined together with other medicines during a smudge. Cedar smoke has a fresh, invigorating sent. If cedar cannot be found than Juniper is often used as well. It can be used as a

form of protection during some ceremonies or during a sweat.

4. Tobacco: is most often used as offerings by most First Nation people. It is the first plant that the Creator gave to Native people. It is also the main ingredient used in smoking preparations for the sacred pipe. Mi'kmaq people use a form of tobacco known as 'Indian tobacco' (lobelia inflata). This type of tobacco is commonly used in smoking mixtures such as 'kinnikinnik' which is combined with alder and red willow bark and bear berry leaves and other herbs, for ceremonies. Tobacco is always offered before picking medicines. When tobacco is offered to a plant before it is picked, the person needs to explain why they are there. It is believed that the plant will let the others in the surrounding area know the reasons. When seeking advice from a Healer, Elder or Medicine person you need to give an offering of tobacco. Also, tobacco must be offered as an expression of gratitude. Traditional people offer tobacco every day, when the sun rises, as a sign of thanks.

5. Fungus: can be another traditional Mi'kmaq medicine however, most Mi'kmaq people have adopted tobacco in place of this. This is used by women usually and it is to protect men from the draining effects of moon-time. There are some types of fungus that are preferred over others, one being deer-foot fungus that grows on birch trees.

Taking care of the sacred medicines:
You should take care of these medicines and treat them with respect. Keep the medicines in a dry place. You can store them in a wooden box or a paper bag. If you have been using alcohol or drugs, Healers recommend that you wait four to seven days before touching medicines.

Medicine Pouch:
The medicine pouch/bag is sometimes referred to as an offering bag and is seen as a sacred object. The pouch has various purposes. It can be used for protection and/or to carry significant stones, herbs, medicines for offering. Everyone has different items in their pouch because it is a symbol of that persons' journey and what is important to them. It can be worn around the neck, waist or in a pocket. It is very disrespectful to touch or open someone else's pouch without their permission.

Source:
Mi'kmaq Spiritualiy – Medicines http://www.muiniskw.org/pgCulture2a.htm
Native Council of PEI: Powwow Information Guide and Coloring Book

Approaching a Traditional Healer, Elder or Medicine Person

When you are on a healing journey, it is a natural step for you to seek help and guidance from a Traditional Healer, an Elder or a Medicine Person. As our awareness and knowledge of our traditions and culture increases, so does our honor and respect for these ways. It is important to exercise caution when seeking healing, teachings or advice. There are always going to be those people who present themselves as Healers, Elders or Medicine People, who have not earned the title, and/or who may use the teachings and medicines in the wrong way. It is important that everyone, especially young people, be aware of this. It is advisable to consult with people who are trusted in your community to get referrals to those who are respected and recognized as a Traditional Healer, Elder or Medicine Person.

Traditional Healers:

A Healer is someone who uses the spirits and the Creators' gifts to heal people in their community. When a Healer talks about healing, they say that the Creator and the Spirits work through them to help the people. If asked why they are different, they will say that gifts they have and that they are allowed to use is what makes them different. They should always express their deep gratitude, for the healing powers they have, to the Creator and the Spirits that do the healing.

Each Healer has a purpose and it is to help people. The Creator and the Spirits that assist them can take many forms. They can be animals, trees, sticks, rocks, fire, water or plants.

The abilities of some Healers are said to be birth right. These Healers tend to begin training early in life and working at a young age to help people in their community. The abilities of other Healers may be revealed later in life as a result of a severe illness or a near death experience. Some may go on fasts for vision quests where their gifts and their responsibilities are revealed and explained to them by the Spirits. A Healer can be given his or her direction of how to take care of the people through dreams and visions.

There are similarities to all healing practices but each Healer has their own way and medicines that they work with. Each Healer is an individual and they live their lives according to the teachings that they have received and adopted throughout their personal journey. Some may work with plants, some may counsel, some may use forms of doctoring and some may heal with their hands. They can work through ceremonies such as a sweat lodge, they can take care of someone while they are fasting or during a sun dance, or they may use drums and shakers as they sing and pray. All of these depend on the form the Healer takes and the work that they do.

Elders:

A traditional Elder is someone who follows the teachings of the ancestors. Traditional Elders live the 'good' life. They teach and share the wisdom they have gained of the culture, history and the language. The sharing of their wisdom is healing. There is no age relation to being an Elder. It all depends on the teachings a person has had and the respect they have earned from their community for their contribution to its' spiritual development. An Elder should never call themselves an Elder. It is a respect bestowed upon them from others. The Elder should be able to reflect the 7 Teachings in their life and behavior on an everyday basis. Elders are a very important aspect of the Aboriginal culture, they are treated with respect at all times and their perspectives are sought by both young and old.

Medicine People:

Some Healers are called Medicine People because they work with plant medicines. They know about plants and their properties and how to prepare them according to their need. There are special procedures for everything and a medicine person must know how and where to get it, how to keep it, how to store it and how it is used. One plant can have five or six different uses.

Doctoring:

Doctoring can take many forms. The use of the medicines and removing sickness by extraction are some examples. Some Healers are specialists in treating certain illnesses. A Healer may have special abilities to help with heart disease or diabetes. Traditional healing is holistic and this sets it apart from the western society's definition of doctors. When a person comes to the Healer with a physical problem, such as an ulcer, they are not only treated for that, but also for some underlying issues that may have caused the ulcer as well. The spiritual, emotional, physical and mental aspects of a person are all treated because they are viewed as being interrelated.

Visits with Healers, Elders and Medicine People:

When you go to a Healer, Elder or Medicine Person, you should be yourself and be respectful to them and to yourself. You should bring tobacco as an offering because it shows respect and it is meant to open the communication pathways between you, the Healer and the Creator. You need to be prepared to tell the Healer why you have come and what your expectations are from the encounter. You need to refrain from taking drugs or alcohol before going to the Healer. Women should schedule their appointments with the Healer around their moontime. You can provide gifts to express your gratitude for the help you have received. This can be anything from a blanket, craft or money. There are certain protocols specific to each Healer, Elder of Medicine Person. Many Healers have helpers who will convey these protocols to you.

Traditional Healing:

Traditional Healers and Elders say that the Great Spirit works through everyone, so that everyone has the ability to heal. A mother tends to her child's scraped knee, a friend listens and provides kind words or the Healer who heals your sickness are all examples.

In the past, knowledge of the medicines was a natural part of everyone's learning. Whole communities knew what plants were for and where to get medicines. Healers and Medicine People were only consulted when specialized help was needed. The general knowledge of the medicines is no longer widespread and there are many illnesses that communities are faced with today, which were not seen in the past. Many Aboriginal people are seeking emotional, mental and spiritual healing for past abuses and traumas, for the pain they have as a result of what generations of their families have been through and the loss of identity and separation from family and culture. Others are seeking help for physical illness such as diabetes and arthritis that affect Aboriginal communities in disproportionately high numbers.

Healing is understood in terms of the spiritual basis of everything. As part of Creation, everything is interrelated and the creation of all things in the environment can influence healing. The approach to healing is through ceremonies and tobacco offerings. The healing that is provided is holistic and based on the understandings of interconnections and the importance of balance and harmony in all creation.

Source :
Interviewing Elders http://www.naho.ca/documents/naho/english/InterviewingElders--FINAL.pdf
Approaching a Traditional Healer, Elder or Medicine Person
http://aht.ca/images/stories/TEACHINGS/ApproachingElderHealer.pdf

Additional Resources

The Lennox Island Cultural Center:

Lennox Island
Cultural Director, 1-902-831-2476

The Center has an interpretive display and explains that history of the Mi'kmaq people through to present day. There are murals that depict the creation story and staff are available to answer any questions.

Greenwich Interpretation Center:

Route 313 Greenwich
PEI National Park
Kings County

Open late May - October
9am-7pm
1-902-961-2514

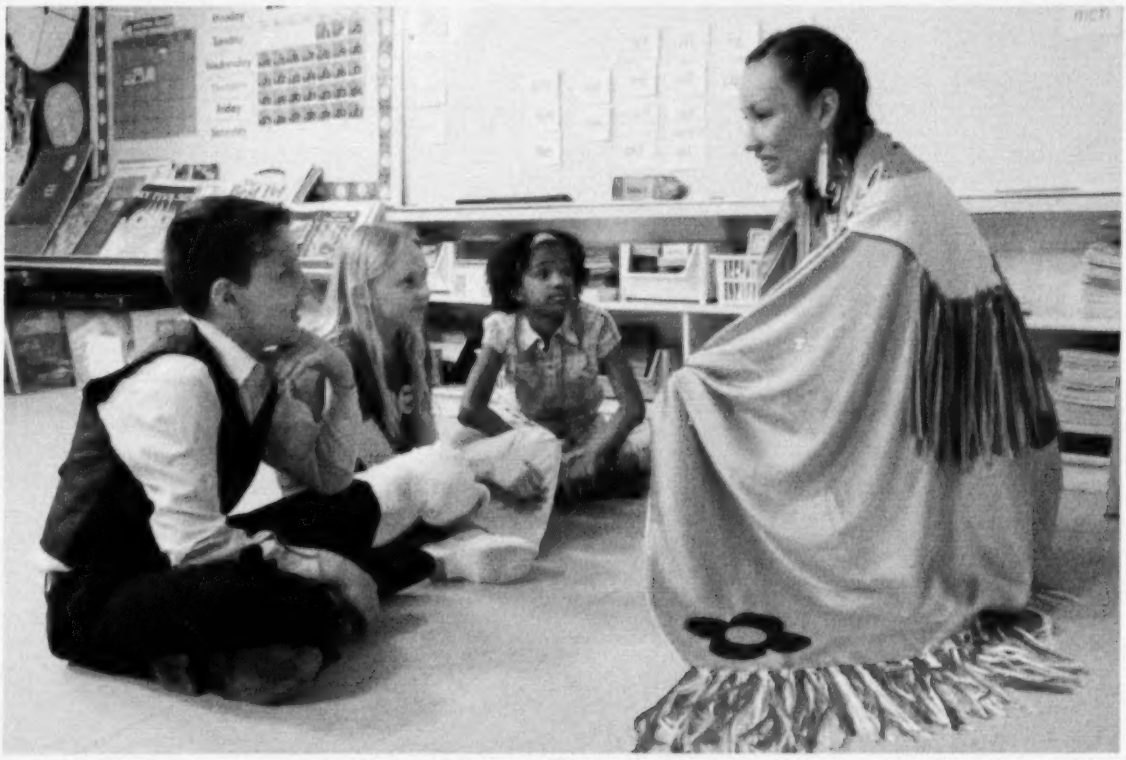
The Interpretive Center offers information about the Mi'kmaq culture and early interactions between Mi'kmaq people and European settlers. It also has a display of Mi'kmaq art, baskets, clothing, ceremonial tools and pictures that provide better detail about the life that many Mi'kmaq people lived.

Age and Activity Guide

While reading this guide it might be helpful to keep in mind that the Aboriginal culture is one that thrives through the maintenance of connections and relationships. So, when trying to figure out what activity is appropriate for a child, it is best to understand that connecting this child with any aspect of their culture is beneficial. Listening to music or reading culturally based books is always a great place to start.

There are a number of different Aboriginal organizations that provide programs and services for youth. It would be helpful to take a look at these in the Community Connections section of the guide. The Aboriginal organizations and service providers are listed and many offer programs specifically for youth. There are several programs that are directed to a particular age group, but many are offered for children of all age ranges.

The following page contains a chart that provides guidance to programs and services that are offered for different ages. Programs can change from year to year so it would be important to call the organizations or communities directly to inquire into what might currently be available.



It takes a community to educate a child to their fullest potential

Age/Activity Guide

Age	Activity
1-2	-Books and music -Cultural events
3-5	-Daycare centers on Lennox Island and in Scotchfort -Aboriginal Headstart programs offered on both Lennox Island and in Scotchfort as well as the Mi'kmaq Family Resource Center (MFRC) -Books and music - Cultural events held by Lennox Island First Nation, Abegweit First Nation, Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI (MCPE) and the Native Council of PEI (NCPEI) -Drop in and play day programs through the MFRC and MCPEI
5-13	-Lennox Island and Abegweit First Nations have programming and activities for this age group -NCPEI has activities such as drum groups, regalia making groups, and youth activity nights -MCPEI also offers specific day camps and workshops -Books and music
13-29	-Lennox Island and Abegweit First Nations provide services and programming - Aboriginal Women's Association of PEI (AWAPEI) -NCPEI -Workshops and day camps offered by MCPEI -The MFRC offers special community groups that get women and mothers together. -Books and Music

CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

POWWOW

A powwow is a celebration of Aboriginal culture. It is a spiritual and social gathering that celebrates life and culture. A powwow is a unique event signified by social changes, cultural sharing and ceremonious rituals. It is a time for sharing, teaching and learning as well as singing, dancing, feasting and drumming.

Powwow's are an expression of culture, pride and identity. It is a unifying ritual that connects the young and old; past and future. Each of the participants at a pow wow makes a significant contribution to the community. The elders are the carriers of traditional teachings which are shared with the young. Women are highly regarded for they are the bearers of life and ultimately of Aboriginal culture and men are the protectors of the community.

The powwow begins each day with a Grand Entry entourage led by a flag bearer carrying the Eagle Staff and the Traditional Flag. The drumming begins and all must stand for the Flag Song and the Veteran's Song. The honor to sing the Flag Song and Veteran's Song is bestowed upon the Host Drum. The Eagle Staff is held high above the dance area. Behind the Flag Bearer, the War Veterans parade while carrying the Canadian and American flags. Following them are the lead female and male dancers, then the traditional women, then the host of the event. After the host comes the male Traditional dancers, the Fancy Shawl dancers and last but not least, the children dancers. This process is similar but not exclusive to all powwow's and can be different depending on the location of the event, as it also depends on the Nation celebrating and their beliefs and values.

Aboriginal dancers represent more than the word 'dance' can describe. Dancing/dancers are a ceremony and a prayer which encompasses all life and can produce many emotions and spiritual reactions. Some dances are old, some are new, the culture lives and evolves through dancers and other ceremonial practices.

Illegal drugs and alcohol are not permitted or accepted at these sacred spiritual ceremonies. The purpose of taking part in this ceremony is to purify the mind, body and spirit; to pray for the healing of others, Mother Earth, and the self; to seek spiritual guidance and to pay respect to

Gisoolg (see creation story, page) for all that has been provided.
It is important to the nature of Aboriginal people and culture that everyone is of sound mind and spirit that there is no abuse or violence at these ceremonies and that everyone is respectful to each other and themselves. It represents the healthy way of life and continues to show how sacred these ceremonies are to many. Abstinence also recognizes that drugs and alcohol are harming so many First Nation people, families and communities. These are not part of the Aboriginal culture and out of respect and protection for all involved in the ceremonies that occur during a pow wow, it is important that everyone exhibits this example.

Powwow Practices

Sacred Fire
Before the powwow begins, a sacred fire is lit at sunrise. It is the responsibility of the men to take care of the fire and ensure it doesn't go out during any of the ceremonies. A man knowledgeable in the traditions and teachings of fire keeping is selected and an offering is made. The fire keeper is responsible for maintaining the fire and also to ensure that individuals visiting it follow the fire protocols. Only sacred medicines such as tobacco, cedar, sage, sweet grass are permitted to be placed in the fire. Also, people must enter and exit through the eastern doorway. Before an offering is made into the sacred fire, each person must smudge themselves. While offering and praying at the fire, each person must move clockwise around the fire.

Grand Entry
During Grand Entry, everyone enters the arena (pow wow circle) through the Eastern opening. All spectators are to stand during the ceremony and remove their hats. No pictures are permitted at this time.

Drum
The term 'drum' refers to the actual big drum and the singers who sit at the drum. The drum is not just an instrument. It is a sacred object that connects all to the heart beat of Mother Earth. There can be many drums at one powwow, but they all must be within the cedar arbor located in the center of the powwow circle.

Eagle Staff
This staff honors the eagle that guards the Eastern direction. It is another sacred object. Only the person permitted to take care of the staff is allowed to hold it. The staff is carried into the powwow circle by this person. Generally it is an Elder, dancer or veteran that is responsible for the Eagle Staff.

Invocation
This is the prayer said by an Eder to begin the powwow after the Grand Entry has occurred and

all participants from the Grand Rntry are in a circle in the powwow dancing area. The Elder must be offered tobacco when he or she is requested to do the invocation or any other duty during the powwow.

Flag Songs
These songs honor the flags of all nations that have been brought into the powwow circle during the Grand Entry. The flags are usually carried in by veterans or warriors. There is no dancing during the Flag Songs.

Veteran's Song
This may follow the Flag Song. It is sung to honor all those who have fallen in battle.

Honor Songs
These are special songs honoring an individual or group for some special accomplishment or contribution to the community. All spectators must stand during this song and no hats are to be worn without an eagle feather attached. Also, no pictures or recording devices are to be used during this song. The person being honored dances around the circle once during their honor song and are followed by their family. Once they have danced around the circle once, they stop at the Eastern doorway and the community comes out to shake their hand and offers congratulations then joins the dance behind the family. After all congratulations are received, everyone dances around the circle until the Honor song is finished.

Intertribal Songs
At a powwow, there will be many intertribal songs. All spectators are welcome to dance to these. Entry must always be through the Eastern doorway.

Eagle Feathers
An eagle feather is sacred to Aboriginal peoples. When an eagle feather is dropped from someone's Regalia during a powwow, it should not be touched or picked up by anyone but another warrior/veteran. When an eagle feather is dropped, it represents a warrior who has fallen in battle. The warrior/veteran performs a ceremony to pick the feather up and to return it to its owner. Once a feather is returned to the owner, it must then be passed on to someone else. The owner makes this decision.

Blanket Dance
These dances are called to help with the traveling expenses of the drum or the costs of producing the celebration. During this dance, four women or young ladies carry a blanket or shawl around the powwow circle. Everyone is encouraged to contribute to this.

Giveaway

A giveaway is a ceremony that is done on a number of different occasions. There will often be at least one give away per powwow. They are done when someone has something special happen to them and it is to express their gratitude for the gift they have received.

Singing, Dancing and Drumming

Powwow singers are very important to the Aboriginal culture. Without them, there would be no dancing. There are many songs with different meanings. Their use is to celebrate and to honor. There are songs that are sung for religious, war and social purposes. They also depend on the tribe/nation and singers. Some tribes/nations may change their songs so that they can be sung by other nations as well. The changes to the songs are through vocals. These replace the words of the old songs. Some songs today are sung in vocals with no actual words. They hold meaning to those who understand the meaning of the song. Other songs are sung in the native tongue. These songs represent the old ways and rich heritage of Aboriginal culture.

Being a **Head Singer** is a great honor. It is usually a man because men are the traditional keepers of the drum. The man who receives this honor is chosen for his experience. He has the right to lead all songs but he has the option of asking other members to sing in his place. Songs are started with the Head Singer, singing the lead line in the song. This lets the dancers know what song is coming up next. After the lead line is sung, the second line will be sung by someone else at the drum and from then on all of the singers can participate in the song. This is the point when all the dancers can begin to dance. The loud beats during the song are called 'honor beats' and this is the time for dancers to honor the drum. The Head Singer has the first and last word of the song and has all the control at the drum.

A **closed drum** means the Head Singer has chosen the singers he wants to sing with him. The powwow circle could be full of great singers, however none should sing unless the Head Singer asks them to.

The **drum** is an important part of Aboriginal culture and ceremonies. The whole culture is centered around the drum. The drum is considered to be a representation of Mother Earth's heartbeat. It provides the beat to which the singers and dancers, sing and dance. Without this, there would be no powwows or other important ceremonies such as the sweat lodge. It is not customary for women to beat the drum. Women also do not usually sit at the drum, but behind the men in the second row.

Dancers have always been a very important part of Aboriginal culture and celebrations. The dances that are usually seen at the powwows today are social dances, which have different meaning and importance. There are many different dancers who perform at powwows. There are Traditional dancers of both genders, there are Head dancers, Grass dancers, Jingle dress dancers

and Fancy dancers. Children can dance and there are songs where anyone can join in and dance around the circle.

The outfits worn by the dancers are similar to the clothing styles today in they tend to change and evolve over time. There is no set style of Regalia. More traditional dancers will wear traditional colors; red, black, white and yellow. The type of Regalia depends on the use. For example, jingle dancers will have jingles on their dresses, whereas other dancers will not.

There are male and female Head dancers. The Head dancers have the responsibility of leading all the people through all the dances that take place during the gathering, with the exception of exhibition dances. These individuals have to know all of the dances and usually have been practicing them for many years. It is an honor to be asked to undertake this responsibility. There are usually only a select few.

Traditional dancers usually have quite elaborate Regalia's that include an array of feathers and bead work. They spend years assembling their Regalia. Many include sacred items displayed on their Regalia such as eagle feathers. The Regalia is respected and no one other than the dancer is to touch it, without permission. Male traditional Regalia have bone beaded breast plates, war shields and some paint their faces. There is an array of patterns that can be displayed on the dancers' face or Regalia and some represent old stories. A women's traditional Regalia most often consists of leather but it can be made of fabric too. The leather Regalia often has intricate bead work. Women will often have a full breast plate as well, going almost to the ground. The skirt comes to the top of the moccasins. Dresses can also be decorated with shells or ribbons. Many also sport beaded hairpieces, earring, chokers and/or rings. Traditional female dancers usually carry a folded shawl over one arm and an Eagle feather fan. The fan is held up during the Honor beats of a song, to give thanks to the Creator.

The traditional female dancers represent the connection that all women have with Mother Earth. When they dance, one foot must always touch the ground. They will move in slow, rhythmic steps to represent life on earth.

There are many dances to represent aspects of life as Aboriginal people know it, one being Grass dancing. Grass dancers have the responsibility of packing down the grass for the rest of the dancers. This dance was introduced by western tribes and has become a common occurrence in many powwow celebrations. It has grown in popularity with young people because they can choose to put individual moves in the dance as well as traditional. Also, the Regalia made for

this dance tend to be extremely bright with interesting bead work. The dancer tries to simulate the way grass looks as it moves in the wind. By doing this the dancer must be skilled and have a great deal of stamina and flexibility. The movements tend to be precise and intricate; however some can add their own flare in the movements as well. Grass dancers are also praying that no harm comes to the dancers or all present at the powwow.

Another dance that represents Aboriginal life is the Jingle Dress dance. Jingle Dress dancers are healers. The dance, dress and music all represent the healing process. The jingles used to be made with shells; however this is rarely done anymore. The Regalia that represents this dance consists of a knee-length cloth dress with rows of hundreds of jingles sewn on the fabric. It is also common to have beaded moccasins, leggings, belts and bandanas. An eagle feather fan, a beaded bag and one eagle feather placed in the hair of the dancer is also common. The jingles dancers dance in a zigzag motion to the beat of the drum, making their jingles shake to the beat.

A War dance that has recently been accepted in Eastern provinces is called the Fancy Feather dance. This dance is done only by boys or men. Many begin this dance at a young age due to the high energy required. This dancing today represents warriors getting 'psyched' up to go to battle. The dancers are in very good shape, they must have an exceptionally high energy, stamina and flexibility level to be able to do this dance. Today's dancers can exhibit an array of aerobics and different tricks during this dance. The Regalia of a Fancy Feather dancer tend to be very bright and vibrant in color, some neon and most have an assortment of bright beads as well.

Another War dance that has been adopted into customs and traditions of Eastern Canada is the Women's shawl or Fancy Shawl dance. Women are not used to represent warriors traditionally; however this dance is one exception. The reason that women have been allowed to represent a warrior for this dance is because in pre-colonial times, women used to be runners. They would run from village to village warning everyone of danger. The risk and bravery shown was what gave women the honor of dancing a Warrior dance. The dance itself represents a butterfly. Women high step and twirl in circular motions to the beat of the drum. This requires a lot of stamina as well. The Regalia consist of a skirt, leggings, beaded moccasins, shawl, yoke and dress made of colorful fabric and ribbons. There is a lot of bead and/or sequence work on these.

Powwow singing, dancing and drumming is more than just a representation of traditional ways of life. They show what the meaning of being an Aboriginal person is. All of these things are representations of very important aspects of the culture, traditions, beliefs and values of Aboriginal people. A powwow brings people together in prayers and celebrations. It is a celebration of a culture that takes great pride in ancestors and in new beginnings. It is a way to show how proud Aboriginal people are of who they are, what they represent and the hope for the future.

Source:

NCPEI Abegweit Pow Wow Information guide and coloring book.

Mi'kmaq Spirit at http://www.muiniskw.org/

Powwow Etiquette

1. Listen to the Master of Ceremonies. He will announce who is to dance and when.

2. When in the Sacred Circle everyone must dress and act appropriately. It is unacceptable for people to wear halter tops, hats, swim wear and/or bare feet.

3. If you want to take pictures or tape record, you must first ask the powwow host and then any and all participants that you wish to photograph. You need to have permission from each individual.

4. No pictures are permitted during the Honor Song. No exceptions.

5. No drug or alcohol use is permitted any time during any of the ceremonies. It is asked that abstinence from these occur four days prior to the ceremonies as well.

6. Women on their Moon Time (who are menstruating) are advised to stay away from the dance area. They are in the process of their own ceremony at that time.

7. All men must remove their hats (unless an eagle feather is attached) during the Grand Entry, Flag Songs, Invocation, Memorial, Veterans Songs and the Closing Song.

8. No one is permitted to enter the dance circle unless they are dancing. Children included.

9. Certain items of religious significance should only be worn by those qualified to do so. An example is an eagle feather.

10. Never touch another person's Regalia without their permission.

11. If you see a lost feather, do not pick it up. Notify the nearest Veteran, Head Male Dancer or the Master of Ceremonies.

12. Pointing with the fingers is considered poor manners. If you need to point in a direction, use your head and nod.

13. Do not litter on the powwow grounds. Respecting Mother Earth is very important.

Fasting

Fasting is a period of time in which a person goes without food and (sometimes) water. A fast can last anywhere from one to four days. The purpose of fasting varies depending on the person, the place and the fast. There are many different circumstances for a person to require a fast. Since these can vary greatly, it is important to keep in mind that each fast is unique to the person and their beliefs, values and traditions.

Fasting is one of the many ceremonies that has been practiced in Aboriginal communities for thousands of years. In the past, Elders would take the young children out to fast in order to help them find their direction in life. Today, as cultural traditions and ways of healing are being revived, more Native people are seeking answers and healing through the ceremony of fasting.

When a person chooses to go on a fast, it is with a purpose in mind. They may seek direction in life or want to learn more about the Creator. They may fast for their spirit name and colors. Healers may fast in order to gain permission to use a certain plant for medicine. Whatever the reason for a fast, preparations and tobacco offerings are necessary.

Fasts are conducted in many different ways and in many different locations. It could range anywhere from the woods to a mountain to a sweat lodge. Wherever a person chooses to fast, they will need to bring their medicines with them, and their sacred items, such as a drum, pipe, smudge bowl, feathers and ribbons of their colors.

Spring and fall are generally the times for fasting. Some teachings say that you should fast in the fall to take away the negative energy and again in the spring to replenish yourself with new energy. This depends on your beliefs.

Offerings happen before the fast. Often, Fasters will go into the sweat lodge before they are taken to their fasting spot. The Fasting Conductor will let the fasters know the duration of their fast through the connection he or she has with the spirit world. Every Faster needs to have someone tend to them. The person who puts you on your fast is usually the one who watches over you. They are known as a Helper.

Everything that is experienced and seen while on a fast is important. Dreams and visions are all part of the journey. It is believed that fasting brings people closer to the spirit world and that a person's spirit is awakened during the fast. If a person is in need or in trouble any time during their fast, they can use their sacred items to call for help from the spirit world or from the natural family (nature).

At the end of a fast, when the Helper returns, the Faster may be taken back to the sweat lodge. This is where the Faster can discuss the teachings they have learned on their fast. A traditional feast is prepared for the fasters in celebration of the spiritual connection and journey that they have experienced.

Three examples of Fasting

1. Cleansing Fast:

A Cleansing Fast is done on a regular basis by men. Women have the gift and ability to cleanse monthly. The purpose of a cleansing fast is to allow the body to cleanse itself of all impurities. At that time, the man should be concentrating on prayer and meditation, to aid in spiritual cleansing. In traditional times, a man would have done a cleansing fast each season if the year.

2. Vision Quest:

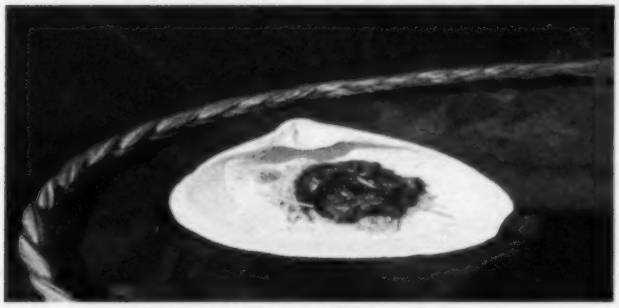
A Vision Quest Fast can be done by men or women. The purpose of the vision quest is to seek guidance from the spirits in the form of visions or dreams. The seeker concentrates strongly on prayer and meditation, including use of a personal pipe if they have one, and requests that the spirits provide him or her with the guidance they need at that point in their life. These fasts tend to be longer in duration than cleansing fasts.

3. Fasting for Ceremonies:

In some cases, people will fast in honor of certain ceremonies. For example, before the spring or fall Bear Feast, people who have the Bear as their spirit guide, or who are part of the Bear clan, can fast in honor of the Bear and his long winter fast. This is generally a short fast, usually a day or two. It can often be done in the home or while going about daily events.

Source:
http://www.muiniskw.org/pgCulture2.htm
http://www.aht.ca/traditional-teachings

Smudging



Smudging is a spiritual tradition in Aboriginal culture. Smudging is similar to blessing oneself with holy water in the Catholic faith. Smudging is done before all ceremonies but can be done when a person feels it is necessary. When participating in a smudge it is important that effort be made to remove all jewelry and to be absent of alcohol or drugs for a minimum of 24 hours prior to it.

To smudge means to burn sacred grasses, such as sweet grass while praying and performing a ritual of pulling and pushing the smoke over the head, heart and body. This practice is done to cleanse the person's mind, body and spirit of all negativity. Mi'kmaq people tend to use sage or sweet grass for their smudges. Other cultures may use cedar. Tobacco is given as an offering to the spirits for good health, protection or for other reasons.

A smudge can be used to cleanse an object or area of negative energy as well. It is believed that bad spirits think the aroma from the smudge is repugnant, so they leave. Many Nations practice this in different ways. They may use the sacred medicines/grasses that the Creator had given them or different rituals to smudge.

Many people use a smudge bowl to keep their smudge contents in until they want to smudge. It is generally made out of a shell, some clay or a rock. This bowl allows for people to burn more than one medicine at a time and for longer periods. A smudge bowl can be obtained in many ways. A person can buy a bowl, one can be given to them, or a person can make one. This depends on the individual.

The smoke of the medicines is a way of sending prayers to the Creator. The good thoughts during a smudging ceremony are carried up by the smoke. Smoke always rises. The Great Eagle captures all of the prayers in the smoke on its feathers then carries it up higher to one of the Creator's helpers. The Creator sees and hears all prayers. It can take 3 seconds, 3 hours, 3 days, 3 weeks, 3 months or 3 years for the prayer to be answered, so patience is a virtue the praying person must have. The Creator answers all prayers if they are important enough to warrant a response.

Source:

St. George's Indian Band http://www.sgib.ca/index_files/Page2487.htm
Methilda Knockwood-Snache, Lennox Island First Nation
NCPEI Powwow Information Guide and Coloring Book

Sweat Lodge

A Sweat Lodge is a sacred place designed for the purpose of cleansing the mind, body and spirit. The Sweat Lodge ceremony is conducted in many different ways and it depends on the location, beliefs and traditions of the person holding the sweat, and their culture. A Sweat Lodge is a very powerful structure to Aboriginal people. It is a place specifically constructed to conduct ceremonies. Sweats vary from purification and cleansing, to healing, to a clan sweat, and to spirit name sweats. There are Sun Dancer sweats and Fast sweats as well. These all have specific functions and procedures. These may depend on a person's gender and age. It can also be for general prayer time or for specific healing of a person or community. The Sweat Lodge ceremony is a very humble one and it begins with giving thanks to Mother Earth. The Sweat Lodge teaches how to respect, be patient, show endurance and to speak our mind freely.

Sweat Lodges are conducted by a Leader who has earned the right to hold sweats by gaining the necessary wisdom and knowledge taught by Elders. A Sweat Lodge Conductor can be either male or female. It is important that a conductor is aware of any health issues before the sweat is taking place, this way they will be able to assist you during the sweat.

The structure of the Sweat Lodge is dome-shaped and circular. It is lined usually with cedar, and sacred medicines surround it to protect the people while in the sweat. Before you enter the lodge, you must offer something to the Alter, the Conductor and/or the Sacred Fire.

The direction of the door way is always to the East in the Mi'kmaq culture. The direction differs according to the Conductor's teachings and the culture they have experienced. The frame of the Sweat Lodge is made up of a specific number of red willow, ash, birch, maple or jack pine saplings. In the past, the frame would be covered with buffalo or deer hides. Today, canvas tarps and blankets are used. The coverings keep the light out and the heat in. Once the lodge is constructed, a ceremony is held before the first sweat takes place.

Inside the sweat, the participants sit in a circle around the central fire pit. The number of participants attending depends on the reason for the sweat. Also, the number of rocks depends on the reason for the sweat. Seven rocks are used in a Cleansing Sweat, fourteen rocks are used in a

Healing Sweat, twenty-one rocks are used in a Hunting Sweat and twenty-eight rocks are used in a Truth Sweat. Through the use of heated stones, called Grandfathers or Grandmothers (depending on the gender of the conductor and participants; women call the rocks Grandmothers and men call the rocks Grandfathers) and water sprinkled over top of them, steam is created. The steam is needed to cleanse.

A Fire Keeper tends the sacred fire outside the lodge. At the request of the Conductor, the fire keeper brings the Grandmothers or Grandfather to the lodge door. They are then placed in the pit at the center of the lodge.

When someone enters the Sweat Lodge, they are doing so with the purpose of seeking help from the Creator and the Spirits. The Helping Spirits are called into the Sweat Lodge by prayers, songs, drums or shakers. A drum is an important item in the ceremony because the drum is made from all of Creation. The sound of the drum is like the heart beat from Mother Earth. Songs and prayers are offered during the ceremony. Sometimes a pipe is used. Each person has the chance to speak or pray within the lodge. Cedar water is poured continuously on the rocks. At the end of the ceremony, the Spirits are thanked and sent home. When someone comes out of the Sweat Lodge, the healing energies and positive energies go with them, as they are cleansed of all negativity.

Sweat Lodge Etiquette:

1. Always bring offerings to the Conductor, altar or fire.

2. To enter a Sweat Lodge for a sweat, you must have a purpose.

3. If you need to leave the sweat before it's over, you are not able to return while the sweat is going on.

4. You must only speak when it's your turn, or if you have a Talking Stick.

5. It is disrespectful to laugh during the sweat.

Source:
Anishnawbe Health Toronto http://www.aht.ca/traditional-teachings
NCPEI Powwow Information Guide and Coloring Book

Talking Circles

What is a talking circle?

A talking circle is a traditional way for Aboriginal people to solve problems. It is a very effective way to remove barriers and to allow people to express themselves with complete freedom. For this reason, it is becoming more and more popular in mainstream society. The symbol of a circle represents the connection that everyone has to each other and that there is no beginning and no end. It also serves to encourage people to speak freely and honestly to everyone at once.

How a Talking Circle Works

Everyone sits in a circle, generally with the men to the North and women to the South. The conductor of the circle will generally sit in the East. A token, such as a feather or a talking stick, is passed clockwise around the circle. As each person receives the token, they may speak for as long as they wish, including addressing a topic brought up by another in the circle. When they have finished, they pass the token on. The token may go around the circle more than once allowing everyone to speak as many times as they wish. The conductor will end the circle.

Types of Talking Circles

1. The Healing Circle

This is the most powerful circle. It is guided by a conductor, and it's purpose is to attempt to give solutions to issues that are bothering people. These issues may be specific or general. Very often, a person may only need to be heard in a sympathetic and supportive manor, for healing to occur. It is also believed that when a person shares something that is bothering them, everyone in the circle will take a piece of the burden from that person, decreasing that burden on that individual.

2. The Sharing Circle

This is the most common type of circle. This circle allows people to share information. There is no purpose or theme and anyone can talk about anything in this circle. This circle is an excellent introduction to ceremonies, and is a great way to show people more about the traditional Aboriginal culture.

3. Mediation Circle

This circle is used to mediate problems between individuals or groups. Often, a main aspect of healing and reconciliation is the opportunity for all parties to speak openly and honestly in a supportive setting, so that both sides can become aware of all aspects that impact the problem on the other party. In these circles, the conductor guides the participants toward finding their own equitable solution to their problem, since a solution that is created by the participants is most likely to work the best in the long run.

There are also circles held through the MCPEI Aboriginal Justice Program. They have specific circles to help with the reconciliation process and sentencing. For more information contact MCPEI at 1-902-626-2882.

Talking Circle Protocol

1. Only one person speaks at a time:
This must be respected at all times. The person who is holding the feather/talking stick is the only person to speak. All others are to listen. Dialogues are not permitted because they leave room for confrontation to occur. It is best to let everyone say their piece during their time.

2. Introduce yourself:
It is polite to introduce yourself in the first round. If you are Aboriginal, you can use your spirit name, otherwise your given name is used.

3. Speak from the heart:
The speaker should address the circle from the heart and for as long as they need to, keeping in mind that others will need time to speak too.

4. Listen with respect:
All people except the speaker should listen attentively and give support to the speaker. Listening with and open mind will allow the speakers true intent to come through.

5. Circle confidentiality:
What is said in the circle needs to stay in the circle. Never repeat anything that is said within the circle, unless you have permission of the speaker. This is a sign of respect.

Smudging the circle participants with sage is a good way to dispel any negativity that they may be carrying with them. Keeping a sage smudge burning during the circle can help when a lot of emotions are anticipated.

Source:
Mi'kmaw Spirituality – Talking Circles http://www.muiniskw.org/pgCulture2c.htm

The Sacred Pipe

A pipe is a sacred item used by many different Aboriginal nations. In the Mi'kmaq culture, there are two types of pipes. One is a personal pipe that can be owned by anyone and be used to pray on their own behalf. The other type of pipe is the pipe of people. This pipe can only be used by those who have the honor of carrying the pipe. These people are referred to as pipe carriers. There is some difference of opinion regarding pipe carriers. Some believe that this is a chosen gift that a person must be born into and others believe that it is something that can be earned. It all depends on the nation/tribe that a person is affiliated with. If there is a need, the pipe carrier will use the pipe to pray for the people, to all in the spirits for a gathering or ceremony or perhaps for a healing or a teaching. By using the pipe, a person communicates with the spirits in prayer and makes their needs known.

The symbolism of the pipe is important to the beliefs of many Aboriginal people. The bowl of the pipe, with its hole for accepting the pipe stem, represents the woman; the stem represents the man. Joining the pipe symbolizes a union and a balance between male and female perspectives of the world. At the same time, the stone of the bowl represents the spirits of the inorganic things of the world while the wooden stem represents the organic things. A pipe should always consist of a wooden stem and a stone bowl.

The Pipe Ceremony

There is an entire ceremony for using the pipe. This allows people to get into the correct mind frame for the prayers. It is a great honor to take part in a pipe ceremony. The sharing of a pipe represents friendship and respect.

Before a person handles the pipe, they had to have smudged themselves and the pipe. When a person holds the pipe, the left hand always holds the bowl and the right hand always holds the stem.

Loading the pipe with a sacred medicine is done in four steps. The four steps are to honor the four directions and those spirits who reside among those directions. During each step, offer a pinch of tobacco to the direction. Address the spirits and ask them to hear you prayers. Place the

sacred medicine in the pipe after the offering to the spirits has been made. Do this for all four directions. When the pipe has been loaded it should be lit with something that Mother Earth made. Some examples would be: a sweet grass braid or a twig from a tree.

Every time the pipe has been smoked a direction needs to be acknowledged. When releasing the smoke from the body, ensure it is deliberate and to the sky. Between each direction, turn the pipe stem in a circle clockwise.

After all the sacred medicine is consumed the pipe can be separated. This is a way of telling the spirits that the prayers are completed. The ashes should be cleaned out of the pipe immediately and disposed of in a sacred fire. The pipe should also be cleaned right after the ceremony.

If a person is involved in a pipe ceremony with others, the pipe will be passed around. The pipe should be accepted with the right hand holding the stem and the left hand holding the bowl. When passing the pipe onward to the next person, it should be turned in a circular motion, clockwise. If a person is part of the ceremony but cannot take a turn inhaling the pipe medicine, they can pass by touching the pipe to their shoulders.

Source:
Mi'kmaw Spritituality – The Sacred Pipe http://www.muiniskw.org/pgCulture2f.htm
NCPEI Information Booklet

How a Drum Came To Be

The women noticed that the community was disrespecting the grandmothers, mothers, sisters and aunts, so they held a meeting.

They spoke of how they carried these children for nine months in their bodies and that they are still being disrespected.

The women decided to make a drum. They started by making a round base representing a mothers abdomen when she is carrying a child. It is round and full also like the moon, sun and earth.

They then covered it with hide to remind them that even animals gave birth and have round stomach's when they carry their young. They tied the hide with sinew and made a four cross shape on the back representing all the important teachings of four.

They beat on the hide to simulate the sounds of the mothers heartbeat. This is familiar because everyone would have heard this noise in amniotic fluid before birth.

When people hear this sound of the drum, it resembles the familiar feeling of being protected, loved and safe. Everyone reacts to the beat of a drum. The women in the community named it the 'Heart beat of a Nation'. People, animals, birds, fish, plants are all thought to understand this feeling. Many people may not know the reason behind the good feelings they feel when a drum is played without this teaching. But it is significant to them and their community.

Source:
Methilda Knockwood-Smache, Lennox Island First Nation

Hair Raising . . .
A Spiritual Journey
By Paula Lightening Woman Johnstone

Hair is the physical manifestation of our thoughts and an extension of ourselves. So pure and sacred are the thoughts of Our Mother, the Earth, that Her hair grows long and fragrant. The Sweet Grasses found growing around the world represent the hair of Our Mother, the Earth. These special grasses have long been collected by the Native Peoples of Earth to use as incense (to perceive by the senses) for physical and spiritual healing, celebrations, for sacred prayer and purification rites. Loving All Her Children, the Earth allows us to share in Her Loving intent and Her perfect and purifying thoughts. On the Medicine Wheel Sweetgrass sits in the North position, the place of Water/Consciousness, the Place of the Minder of the Universe, and the Soul of Man.

As Native People walk the Sacred Path of the Creator God, Our Hair, the physical extension of our thoughts, allows for our direction along the Path of Life. All peoples of Earth have cultural tales/tails (tails guide beings, example; without tails-birds could not fly, fish could not swim and animals would be without balance) depicting the Power of Hair/thought, telling of the strengths of men and women, using thoughts/hair to defeat evil. Should you maintain pure and perfect thoughts, evil sorcerers and witches cannot use your hair in their evil ceremonies to defeat you, for they need the weaknesses in your thoughts, to cause you harm. Believe in the Power of the Creator, not in the magic of Man.

In many countries around the World, Holy men and Holy women are recognized by the length and glory of their hair. The cutting of hair by oppressors has long represented the submission and defeat of a People, through humiliation. The Language and Sacredness of Hair is taught by All Tribal People of the Earth. The way a People comb (the Alignment of thought) braid (the Oneness of thought), tie (the securing of thought) and color (the conviction in thought), their Hair is of great significance. Hair styles are important for they portray and announce participation in various events and the feelings expressed by People; the state of merriment or mourning, at a given time, or a stage of life; whether one is coming of age, marriageable or married, one's age and tribal status. Hair can depict the Tribal Spirits one follows given the geographical location of a Peoples and the Spirits flowing through someone depending on their age as a Spirit and the spirits that one is calling on, in a given ceremony. Different styles signify the Tribe one belongs to and are worn to indicate times of peace or war.

Hairstyles like seasons change for public, private and ceremonial occasions. Hair represents the pure thoughts and spiritual status of and Individual, showing the bonds and spiritual oneness of a Family and defines the cultural harmony and spiritual alignment of a Nation. Hair represents the pure and spiritual thoughts of all tribal people.

Everyone is given straight or curly hair, depending on the Creator's discretion. Straight, flowing hair, teaches of one that can gracefully hold or let go of life. Thoughts can extend in a uniform manner, flowing directly from the source, like the movement of water flowing from the mountain top to the ocean, and then the water can rise up again to fall once more. For those with curly hair, they will have the potential to understand the spiral, curve and energy of life. Their thoughts teach about the decrease and enlargement of life's movement. The winding, circular energy of movement and growth on the Earth.

Native children are taught from a young age how to groom hair and care for themselves, their immediate and extended family. They are taught that grooming one and other, unifies the bond of a family, caring for one and other strengthens the family ties, respecting one and other maintains family harmony and loving one and other defines a family's pride. They are taught to correct one and others appearance and habits, to strengthen one and other continually, causing them to be beautiful, strengthening in them the ideal that they are an extension of the Creator's thoughts of love. They emanate from the thoughts of perfection and strive to become (to pass from one state to another and to enhance) perfection.

As Children are raised up, so too is the spiritual level of teaching raised, to elevate their Spirits. In youth and innocence (in-knowing-sense=freedom from guilt, sin or pain), mankind is blessed with bounty of beautiful hair. The more pure and sacred your thoughts, the longer, healthier, and vibrant, your hair. As Humans age and lose their innocence, falling of the Path of Light, harbouring dark thoughts, losing the light of pure thought, Humans lose their hair and the shine (aureole) it once had.

Caring for hair is very important, for like the Sweet Grasses of our Mother, the Earth, our hair holds the purity of our intent. For our thought can purify the thoughts of others. Native children are taught to wash and rinse hair, and are taught the proper use of the gifts of the Plant People; learning which bulbs, roots and herbs, will bring luster and light to ones hair. Maintaining the health of ones hair is important, as is maintaining all physical and spiritual health and wholeness.

They are also taught combing rites. Special combs were and in some places still are used for the Sweetgrass Rites and ornate combs were and still are made for Human hair. Careful consideration is given to the types of woods, bones, metals, jewels, and brush materials as well as the symbols and (spirit) designs, for the best physical and spiritual purpose, of the task of combing Ones hair. The Porcupine shared itself by giving Native Women a Sacred Comb, which was made from the bone found on the underside of the Porcupine's tail. After taking the skin off, drying it and making a wooden handle, it was ready to use.

Combing is the act of separating and adjusting the hair so that it will lay or move in the best or

most beautiful way. Native families, knowing that our hair is the single manifestation of our thoughts, also understand that our thoughts need to be corrected and adjusted by the Creator, so that we will move gracefully along the Beauty Way, the Sacred Path of Life.
When combing our hair each day, we are re-minded to keep our thoughts pure. The hair that falls out and gathers in our brushes and combs, is gathered up and kept in a special place or pouch, for the 28 days of the moon/month. This hair is a collection, a record of our past thoughts and deeds. At the time of the full moon, the time of illumination and completeness, the hearts of the families, the women, gather in a ceremony and offer the thoughts of their families, their bundled hair, to the spirits of the fire, earth and air.

When our offerings of Hair are placed in fire, our thoughts are uplifted, sent through the smoke, moved by the power of the Moon, and prayerfully given to our Father, the Creator God or if buried, returned to Our Mother, the Earth and She relays our intent through the Moon to Our Father. In this way the Creator reads your families thoughts and sends His Spirits/Angels to guide you on the Sacred Path, correcting your Mind, Hearth and Soul, strengthening the Body of Oneness, till the next Full Moon. Holding Sacred thoughts, choosing to walk a path of light, One that is pleasing to the Creator God, strengthens the individual Family, and the Greater Family of Universal Oneness, that every one is a part of.

Your hair teaches you that your thoughts are to flow in all directions but are to be informally directed. Yellow, Rred, Black and White are the four colors of hair symbolizing the major directions of Earth, and the direction of those constant in the flow of thought/Spirit. Also, the four directions in between, Gold, Orange, Brown, Blue/Grey, Hair indicating those continual in thought/spirit, flowing throughout the Universe. Your hair is just one way of indicating to others another conviction you carry throughout your lifetime. When the color of your hair changes, naturally, that means you have been elevated, by God. You have more responsibility in and for Life.

You were given a sacred color of hair to wear and you were never to bleach(whiten) or dye your hair. Even the word dye/die when used for coloring states the death or divination of a God-given thought and purpose. Dying (destined for death) ones hair places your desires before the thoughts of God. Bleaching ones hair to change spiritual status, does not make one an Elder or Pre-dating Spirit, for you are born who you are, chosen, and elevated by God, not Mankind. In Native ceremony when ocher and hennas were used on hair it was understood that it was for a Sacred purpose and Spirit (God) inspired, and the natural color would naturally return.

The act of cutting your hair is the cutting off of the flow of thought. You actually sever away past thoughts from future deeds. Cutting your hair usually occurs when one chooses to make a major change in ones life, putting past misdeeds behind them, and beginning a new/knew life. In Native teachings many tribes cut their hair during the mourning process, which symbolizes the

deep wound to ones sensibilities caused by the piercing hurt of a loved ones passing.

Other tribes, remembering that they are Spirits that live forever, cut their hair after a year of mourning. Symbolic of the severing of their ties, freeing the spirit of their loved ones, allowing them to enter the mourning of the next world. Ready to start a new life, knowing they must respect and honor their loved one, they feast and urge their loved One's spirit on. Demonstrating their love for all life, they signal they too are ready to start a new day, a new morning. For in wisdom, they except the greater cycle of life. They know the body of their past love, was given back to the Earth and the Spirit of their Loved one, needs to return to the Sol/Star their Spirits emanate from, to be re-aligned in the Body of Oneness, being reborn as their future and the renewed Children of Earth.

Even the time of cutting hair is important, for all things need to be in harmony with the natural rhythm and flow of the Universe. Cutting old thoughts, harvesting full grown ideas, cutting all ties, is best on the Full Moon. For fresh starts, like the planting time, for new seeds of thought, or for the trimming, pruning and monthly maintenance, we cut our hair by the light of the New Moon, so it will grow thick and quick.

Young men are often seen with braids of sweet grass for personal purification rites. In some Tribes, men weave sweet grass into their braids to unify their thoughts with their Mother, the Earth, strengthening their thoughts of Oneness. This demonstrates the way in which hair is used to extend and bind your thoughts with others.

By attaching a lock of a loved ones hair, in your hair, or by carrying their hair on your person, one is able to carry thoughts of their loved ones with them on their travels. It is so important to have your families spiritual support and protective thoughts (prayers) in life generally, that the hair of ones family and the hair of their protective spirits was braided into a warriors battle dress for added strength and stamina. It is generally understood that you do not touch a person's hair without permission.

Sweetgrass headbands (the things that keep your brains in) (joke) are worn for concentration, to purify thought. The aroma of sweetgrass clears the mind. Sweetgrass necklaces or collars refer to the Spirit that is born head-first, and is used to call-in/collar the Spirit of Wisdom you are descended from. Sweet grass braids, like the braids on your head symbolize serpents of wisdom, that keep you on the Sacred Path of Light. It is the double-headed serpent that warns you with a shake of its tail, should you step off the path of light, to get back on the sacred path or suffer the venomous bites of despair, depression or death, depending on how far you wander.

Braids symbolize Oneness and Unity. The flowing strands of hair, individually weak but when joined together in Oneness, physically demonstrate the Strength of Oneness; "One mind, One

heart, and One soul" the Song of the Uni-verse, and the Sacred thoughts you are to hold. There are times to wear the hair braided and times to let it flow free, different times to demonstrate your harmony with the flow of life and to demonstrate your thoughts of Oneness to others.

There are different teachings about the way to braid ones hair, and different teachings about the ways and rites of braiding sweet grass.

One way is to gather 28 whole strands of Sweetgrass, one strand symbolizing each sacred day in one moon(month). Divide them in three equal piles, 9 strands each, each pile symbolizing the wandering spirits of the 3 tiers of Heaven (upper world, middle world, lower world), and with the one strand that is left, the strand that Symbolizes the Great Spirit, the Creator God(Father Sun), you tie all the loose strands together. Remembering as you braid the Sweetgrass, to keep your thoughts and intent pure and healthy, placing the prayers of love for life into your braid. It is the intent placed in the medicine that makes all healing possible. To end the braid, tie a knot with the grass. A Knot is symbolic of Union and a Bond. The Tie that binds. The knot in the Sweetgrass braid also binds all the "thoughts" of our Mother together, to teach us, once again of the strength of Unity or Oneness.

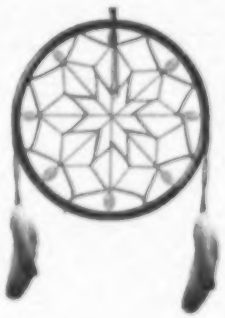
Know it is only the Creator's power that holds the Universe together and the wandering spirits are His Great Spirits that flow and protect Life all the way to the outer edges of the Universe and the 3 tiers of Heaven are the lower, middle and upper worlds or the Sea, Earth and Sky(Universe) where all the Great Spirits dwell. Keeping thoughts of Love and Respect for All Life in your Mind and Heart, allows one to share the Sacred Sweetgrass with others in a good way.

When working with the Sacred Medicines, our intent should be as pure as the intent of our selfless Mother, the Earth. She wants only the best for Her Children. So hold Sacred thoughts; thoughts of Oneness and Healing thoughts; thoughts of Empowerment and Love, when braiding and using Sweetgrass. Soon All Nations will be strong again.

Source: http://www.manataka.org/page1936.html

Dreamcatchers

The dreamcatcher is an adopted symbol of many Aboriginal cultures today. It has been adopted by the Mi'kmaq people. The Ojibwe people were the first to use and invent dreamcatchers. Dreamcatchers can be made in many different ways, with different colors and patterns. They can be simple or complex. They can have feathers and beads hanging from or within it. There are also many different versions of the dream catcher legend, each one as beautiful and meaningful as the next.

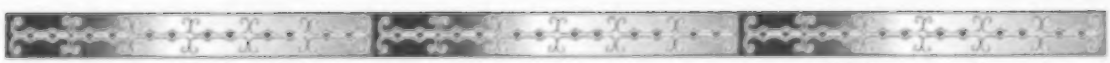


A common Dreamcatcher story is told like this:

One day while an old woman was laying down, a spider caught her eye. She watched the spider for several days before bed and when she woke up in the morning. She was amazed at how beautiful the web looked under the moon and in the morning sun. The web continued to grow larger and larger. One day, the woman's grandson came to visit. When he saw the spider's web he ran over to kill it and destroy the web it had created. The woman had stopped him just in time. She told him not to harm the creature because the Creator loved all of it's creations and that everything had a purpose in the world. When the boy left that evening, the spider spoke to the woman. It said 'because you saved my life, I will grant you one wish'. The woman's only wish was to be able to create a web just like the spiders'. So, using a ring and a thread, the spider taught the old woman how to weave a web design similar to it's beautiful web. When it was complete, the spider explained that this was a special web. The ring symbolized continuous life. The web symbolized the different paths one could take. The hole in the middle of the web was where good things can come to good people. The spider explained that if the women placed the web above her bed at night, that spirits would come to her. There are good and bad spirits in the world. The good spirits will be able to get through the web, the bad ones will be stuck in it. When the sun rises in the morning, the bad spirits will parish in the sun's heat. The good spirits will provide good thoughts and good dreams for her and her loved ones.

Source:
Native Council of PEI: Information Booklet
Native American Technology and Art – Dream Catchers at http://www.nativetech.org/dreamcat/dreamcat.html

MI'KMAQ LANGUAGE



Mi'kmaq Language

The Mi'kmaq language is called Mi'kmaqi'simk. Mi'kmaq is the plural form of the word and Mi'kmaw is the singular form. "Q" is the plural ending in the Mi'kmaq language like "S" is the plural ending in English. The plural nouns 'Mi'kmaqs' contains two plural endings and this is strange to those who are Mi'kmaq so the preferred way to describe more than one person of this culture is to say 'Mi'kmaq people'.

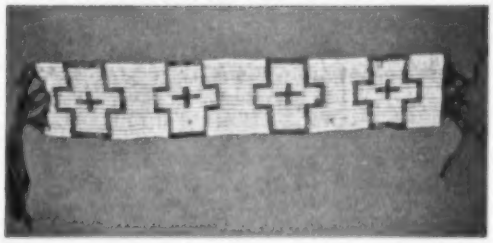
Mi'kmaq is pronounced as mick mack in English. Mi'kmaq people pronounce it Mee-ga-mah. The apostrophe is a vowel marker indicating that the 'I' is a long vowel. The most accepted way to spell 'Mi'kmaq' is Mi'kmaq, Mikmaq or Micmac. There is no one correct spelling but these are accepted and used most often.

The word Mi'kmaq originally comes from a word meaning 'my family'. It means more than family though, it means 'my connections', 'my friends', 'my kin'. It describes the relationship rather than a distinct set of people. The word that Mi'kmaq people use to describe themselves is 'L'nu' which means 'us' or 'the people'. The phrase Msit No'kmaq means 'all my relations'. This phrase is usually said after a prayer and it symbolizes everything in the environment and the relationships that Mi'kmaq people have with these things.

The Mi'kmaq language is from the Algonquian language. It is spoken by approximately 9000 Aboriginal people in the Maritimes, most predominantly in Nova Scotia. This language is related to other major Aboriginal languages such as Cree, Ojibwe and Lenape.

Mi'kmaq was primarily an oral language which was passed down for generations through stories, legends and songs by Elders and other's in the community. The stories, legends and songs had many different meanings from education, religion to recreation. When they wanted to write something down to keep track of it, the Mi'kmaq used hieroglyphs. They would mark symbols and signs into tree bark or on stones. This was to keep track of good hunting grounds to visit again, places to avoid etc. The hieroglyphs that were written were not broken down word by word but rather by concepts and ideas.
This language is a very efficient one in that it does not have one word to represent one thing, but one word to represent an entire idea.

Wampum Belts



The Mi'kmaq people also used wampum belts to keep track of historical events. A member of the community called the 'pu'tus' was responsible for recording information and keeping the belts safe. The pu'tus would organize shells and beads along the strings in order to represent and organize specific information. At a meeting the pu'tus would take the belts out and read the information to the people. The wampum belts could get very long and the pu'tus could add on to them for as long as he/she wanted. Even in large grand council meetings of Chiefs, wampum belts would be used to record the ideas and information. They would then be read back to the people or the Chiefs themselves. These belts were also exchanged and used with the Europeans.

Mi'kmaq Alphabet

In the early 1970's two linguists named Bernie Francis and Doug Smith identified a Mi'kmaq alphabet. Before this, there was no such thing. The English alphabet has 21 consonants and 5 vowels. All the letters can be combined to create sounds that make up the words. The Mi'kmaq language is not like this. There are fewer consonants and vowels and one additional character called the schwa "i". Francis and Smith identified the consonants to be 'p, t, k, q, j, s, l, m, n, w, and y' and the vowels to be 'a, e, i, o, u,'. These are the only letters required to speak the Mi'kmaq language. Francis and Smith also identified an orthography that was specific to the Mi'kmaq and different from all other languages. This was adopted by the Mi'kmaq people as the accepted and official written language. It is called the Smith-Francis orthography.

Some examples of common words are:

ENGLISH	MI'KMAQ
Family	Nikmaq
Welcome	Pjilsa'si
Thank you	Wela'lin
Red	Mekwe'k
Blue	Musqunamu'k
Green	Stoqnamu'k
Purple	Nisqunamu'k
Black	Maqtewe'k
White	Wape'k
Head	Nunji
Feet	Nkat
Hands	Npitn
Eyes	Npukik
Mouth	Ntun
One	ne'wt
Two	ta'pu
Three	si'st
Four	ne'w

Source:
Mi'kmaq Fact Sheet http://www.bigorrin.org/mikmaq_kids.htm
Mi'kmaq Association for Cultural Studies http://mikmaqculture.com/index.php/mikmaq_history_culture/language
Mi'kmaq Talking Posters http://www.firstnationhelp.com/ali/posters/
MCPEI : Mi'kmaq on Epekwitk

O Kji Niskam
(O Great Spirit)

O Kji Niskam
O Great spirit

Ta'n wsitun nutmaq wkjusniktuk
Whose voice we hear in the winds

aqq ta'n wklamlamuti iknmatk Mimajuaqan Wksitkamuk.
And whose breath gives life to all the world

Nutui! Apjejiji, aqq menaqanay
Hear us! We are small and weak.

Nutai Mlkiknoti aqq Ksituoqnm
we need your strength and wisdom

Asitelmi pmlikan ta'n me keluk aqq asiteten
let us walk in beauty and make our

Mpukikl nmitunew mekwek aqq
eyes behold the red and

musknamukw na'ku'set walkwasiej.
purple sunset.

Asiten npitnn kepmitetmnew ta'n tesik kisitun
Make our hand respect the things you have made

aqq asiteten nsituaqann nettistaqanan nutminew ksitun.
And our ears sharp to hear your voice

Asitelmi nsitueyin, klaman kisi kjijtutis
Make us wise so that we may understand

Ta'n tesik kisi kinamajik Mi'kmaq.
the things you have taught our people.

Asitelmi kisi kinamasin ta'n tesik kisi katun
let us learn the lessons you have hidden in

Etasiw nipi aqq kuntewiktuk.
every leaf and rock.

Etawey mlkiknoti, kwalaman Ma aji knaw
We seek strength not to be greater than

aqq Wijikitiek.
our brothers.

Pakis kisi wsuikneman ta'n mawi ksiktanit
but to fight out greatest enemy

Na nekm, Ni'n
ourselves.

Asitelmi nekaw kisikajeyin kwalaman kisi aji asukultis
Make us always ready to come to you

Waqmektnn npitnn aqq kisi koqaji ankamulin.
with clean hands and straight eyes.

Kwlaman ta'n tujiw Mimajuaqanm pemi kaqiaq
so when, life fades

Staqa nike Na'ku'set pemi walkwasiej asitelmatisk Njijaqamij kisi aji asukulnin
our spirits may come to you

aqq ma tami iktnuk Ntaqoqon.
without shame.

The Lord's Prayer

nnshinen Wajok ebin tchiptook delwigin
Our Father in heaven seated may thy name
meguidedemek Wajok n'telidanen tchiptook ignemwiek ula
be respected in heaven to us may grant thee
nemulek uledechinen. Natel wajok deli chkedoolk
to see in staying. There in heaven as thou art obeyed
tchiptook deli be chkedulek makimiguek elmek
may so obeyed on earth where we are
Delamukubenigua echomioguel apch neguech kiehkook
As thou hast given it to us in the same manner also now to-day
delamooktech penegunnenwin nilûuen; deli abikchiktakachik
give it our nourishment to us; we forgive those
wegalwinametnik elp kel nixkam abikchiktwin elweultick
who have offended us so thou O God forgive our faults
melkenlavech winnchudil mu k'tygalinen keginukamkel
hold us strong by the hand not to fall keep far from us
winnchigueI twaktwin. N'djelietch.
sufferings evils. Amen.

Fig. 1083.—The Lord's Prayer in Micmac hieroglyphics.

The Eagle Song

In Mi'kmaq:

YI-O YI-O YO-ANE
YI-O YI-O YO-ANE
YI-O YI-O YO-ANE

Na'musikiskika, Na Metewintoq

Kiktoqaqsintew kitpuaq
Kiktoqaqsintew kitpuaq
Peji Kinua'tuiek, kitpuaq.

YI-O YI-O YO-ANE
YI-O YI-O YO-ANE
YI-O YI-O YO-ANE

In English:

YI-O YI-O YO-ANE
YI-O YI-O YO-ANE
YI-O YI-O YO-ANE

In the sky, you'll hear him singing

He will fly around, the Eagle
He will fly around, the Eagle
He is our messenger, the Eagle

YI-O YI-O YO-ANE
YI-O YI-O YO-ANE
YI-O YI-O YO-ANE

Mi'kmaq Honor Song

Kepmite'tmnej..... Ta'n teli Lnu'ltikw.

Nima'j tutk....., Ke' mawi'ta' nej.

Kepmite'tmnej..... Ta'n wetapeksulti'kw

Nikma'j tutk....., Ke' apoqonmatultinej.

Ke' apoqnmatultinej Ta'n ... Kisu'lkw

Teli ika'luk si'kw, Ula Wksitkamu'kw.

Wey yo hey hi ya
ha wey yo hey yo hey hi ya
wey yo hey hi ya
ha wey yo hey hi ya
wey yo hey hi ya
wey yo hey hi ya
ha wey yo hey hi ya hey yo

English Translation

Let us honor our being Mi'kmaq.

My friends, Let us get together.

Let us honor our ancestry

My Friends, Let us help one another.

Let us help one another, As Our Creator

Had placed us on this Earth for that reason.

Source:
Native American Facts for Kids at www.bigorrin.org/mikmaq_kids.htm
Mi'kmaq Association of Cultural Studies at www.mikmaqculture.com/index.php/mikma_history_culture/language
Mi'kmaq Talking Posters at www.Firstnationhelp.com/ati/posters
MCPEI: Mi'kmaq on Epekwitk

Ways to Incorporate Aboriginal Traditions and Language in Your Home:

Learn a few words at a time and try to use them regularly at home. Every little bit helps.

Ask people who are fluent in the language to visit your family, or if your family can visit them.

Take Mi'kmaq classes.

Watch Aboriginal language programs. Even if your child doesn't understand.

Use the language when you are doing things with your children.

Bring home books for your child to read and try to read them.

Attend a library story reading of the language you are trying to learn.

Write labels in the language you are trying to learn and in English and place them on different objects around your home.

Teach your child one word a day. Then use it as many times as you can in that day.

Include traditional activities like storytelling, drumming, dancing, games and singing at home. These are great ways for children to learn culture and language.

Use humor with learning. If you can make up silly rhymes that incorporate the language your trying to learn with the language you know, you are more apt to remember them and your children will have fun making up the rhymes.

Ask fluent speakers to have a conversation in front of you and your child. This lets children 'see' and 'hear' the language working and the rules around language use. Then have them teach the correct pronunciation of language/words learned so far.

Use different activities to learn. Some people need to hear words to learn, others need to see and others need to write down the words.

Go to events that will have people talking in the language you want to learn. Powwows are full of Elders and people who are eager to teach culturally relevant information.

Learn some words than create your own stories that go with the words that you have already learned.

Have children draw pictures that represent the words or phrases that they have learned in the new language.

Source:
Northwest Territories (NWT) Literacy Council – How To Kits at www.nwt.literacy.ca

MI'KMAQ HISTORY

Mi'kmaq Life Prior To European Contact

The concept of land ownership was foreign to the Mi'kmaq. Native spirituality dictated that no one group or person was given absolute ownership over the land. The land was meant to be shared with other nations, creatures and for those who had gone before and those who are to come.

The Mi'kmaq people did not limit themselves to one specific location but they did have assigned hunting and fishing territories. For many, home meant two or three favorite locations within those territories, that they would visit annually. Mi'kmaq people were semi-nomadic. They didn't do much farming because they moved around a lot collecting food from different areas. They would hunt caribou and moose and fish seals, walrus and whales. During the summer, they would collect berries, squash and maple syrup.

The council of chiefs were aware of the need for wise use of game and other resources. They assigned separate hunting and fishing districts to bands and passed tribal laws to control hunting at different seasons.

There was no formal band membership. Members from one band were free to travel and live among different bands. A persons presence was made aware of as they engaged in community activities and contributed to the running of the camp. This tradition of accepting Mi'kmaq from other bands has survived today and it is not unusual to find members from one band living on the reserve of another.

There were many highly developed systems of education, justice and spirituality. Educating the children was the responsibility of the whole community. There was a system of governance,in which the chiefs had a primary role. Elders' opinions were very important in the decision making process. There were many spiritual ceremonies practiced on a daily basis. There were specific ceremonies for special events, such as a birth, death and marriage.

One of the highest priorities was to educate the children. They were taught all the major aspects of the culture and traditions in order to collectively survive and prosper. Some of the main teachings were how to treat the world around them, their elders, others and how/why everything is interrelated.

The children were taught specific roles and duties. These often were assigned due to the gender of the child. The male children were taught how to fish, hunt, and how to make nets, traps, bows, arrows, snowshoes, axes and other weapons for hunting, fishing and protection. The female children were taught how to gather plants and herbs used for food and medicine, how to prepare

and preserve food and how to make clothing. The women and girls were responsible for caring for the children, fetching water and setting up the wigwams.

Although there were warriors in the society who were taught to protect the land from warfare, they were not abusive. Women and children were held in high regard and no kind of abuse was acceptable at any time.

Families took care of each other and it was a common occurrence to live inter-generationally in a single wigwam.

The Mi'kmaq understood and respected the laws of nature. They only hunted what was necessary for survival. Every part of the animal was used for food, clothing, supplies and/or tools. The bones of the animal were never buried, but were hung to show respect for the animal that had given its life for their survival. Hunting for pleasure was and still is seen as disrespectful and unacceptable.

Mi'kmaq people relied on plants and animals for medicines and first-aid. Youth were instructed in the medicinal value of each plant and animal. Many herbs were used for common ailments such as head colds, coughs, and stomach disorders. These herbs were introduced by the native people and are now used in common household remedies such as Tylenol. The Mi'kmaq practiced many first aid procedures such as bloodletting, applying poultices, emetics and sweat baths. Emetics were used to induce vomiting. They were made from the roots of various mild-weeds, or seeds of leatherwood and black alder. For swelling or boils, incisions were made to draw out the blood. The most common remedy for an open wound was the application of a slice of beaver kidney, which absorbed blood and pus. For wound dressings, fir balsam was used. Broken bones were set with three-layered splints. First the bone was padded with fine moss, which was saturated with balsam. This layer was then wrapped with soft birch-bark and then finally, hard pieces of bark were tied around the limb. Seal oil was used to help protect against the cold and to relieve the itch and sting of insect bites. It was also used in hair to prevent it from becoming entangled in bushes. The Mi'kmaq relied heavily on the power of the Shaman for treatment of mysterious illnesses.

Source:
Alma MacDougall, Abegweit First Nation
Mi'kmaq Past and Present: A Resource Guide. Nova Scotia Department of Education (1993)

Residential School History

A residential school was an education system created based on the beliefs that Aboriginal people were savages who needed to be assimilated into the mainstream European culture. The intentions of the Canadian government and the church were to assimilate Aboriginal people and end all Aboriginal culture, traditions, beliefs and values. This education system existed for approximately 150 years. It started around the 1850's and the last school closed in 1996. Church officials and school staff were hired to run the residential schools. There were laws passed and policies and procedures put in place that supported the school forcing children to attend them and forcing their parents/families/communities to sign away all guardianship rights of those children to the school principals or other school officials. It was in 2008 that Stephen Harper, on behalf of the government of Canada, apologized for its part in the residential school era.

There was a residential school in almost every province in Canada. The only provinces that did not have a residential school were Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador and New Brunswick. The children from these provinces were forced by law to attend schools in other provinces such as Nova Scotia or Ontario. There were also church run schools on Prince Edward Island, however they were not considered to be residential schools. There were many day schools in the Maritimes that were not considered to be residential schools because the church ran these instead of the federal government.

The abuses and traumas that were suffered due to the residential school era continue to impact many families and people in the Aboriginal communities. Many illnesses, disabilities and disorders can be attributed to the breakdown of culture caused by the residential school system or the traumatic events that many people suffered from attending residential schools. There was significant sexual, physical, mental, emotional abuse/torture and neglect and experiments suffered in most of these schools; at the hands of nuns, priests, staff, guards and others. It is estimated that approximately 50,000 children died in these residential schools. Even though

many Aboriginal children from Canada went to these schools, it is important to note that the experiences differed depending on province, school and child. Not all experiences were negative in every school, however most schools have a very black history.

The inability to embrace and experience the Aboriginal culture and traditions as well as family customs, beliefs and values have left many people with a complete loss of identity and an inability to parent effectively. Parents lost the ability to parent altogether for many generations. Non-Aboriginal people did not trust Aboriginal parents to raise their children, therefore they forced them to send their children away. Laws were created to enforce the removal of children from their homes and many Aboriginal people were left with a hole in their hearts. Families and communities have suffered an extreme loss of culture due to the inability to speak their language and perform their ceremonies and traditions. When reunited with their children again, the language barriers and shame regarding the culture was evident in the children and they were segregated once again, this time within their communities. The Residential schools have left a legacy of broken individuals, torn families, a disintegrating culture and a society that is unwillingly dependent on government welfare. The result of this legacy is currently portraying itself in the staggering poverty rates, high unemployment rates, high suicide rates, lower education levels, high rates of alcoholism and high rates of crime displayed within Aboriginal communities. For individuals, the legacy of the residential school system is lowered self-esteem, increased confusion of self-identity and cultural identity and a continued distrust of, and antagonism toward, authority.

Source:
Hidden From History: The Canadian Holocaust The Untold Story of the Genocide of Aboriginal Peoples by Church and State in Canada at www.canadiangenocide.nativeweb.org
The Justice System and Aboriginal People: The Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission. Report including chapter on relationship to Child Welfare at http://www.ajic.mb.ca/volumel/toc.html

Timeline of Residential Schools

1600-1850's- The Canadian government and the Catholic religion collaborated in attempts to assimilate and colonialize all native people in Canada. Many human right violations occurred during this time that subjugated, weakened and fractured Native culture.

1857- Gradual Civilization Act passed to assimilate Indians into mainstream Canadian culture.

1870-1920- Period of assimilation where the clear objective of both church missionaries and government was to assimilate Aboriginal children into the lower fringes of mainstream society.

1876- Under the influence of former Prime Minister John A MacDonald, Canada establishes the Indian Act which makes all Indian's non-citizens and wards of the state. Natives are segregated to 'reserve' land and denied any legal status such as ability to own property, vote and or have any civil rights. Their status of 'legal wards of the state' remains unchanged today.

1891- The first medical report from Dr. George Orton in Alberta was ignored. His report stated that there are massive deaths in these schools caused by rampant and untreated tuberculosis.

1907- Dr. Peter Bryce, Chief Medical Officer for the federal government's Department of Indian Affairs (DIA), conducts a national tour of Indian boarding schools to study health conditions. Bryce's subsequent report to DIA Assistant Superintendent Duncan Campbell Scott documents that over one-half of all the children in these schools are dying because of tuberculosis being deliberately introduced among them by staff. Bryce also claims that the churches running the schools are deliberately suppressing evidence and statistics of these murderous practices.

1920- Compulsory attendance for all children ages 7-15 years. Children were forcibly taken from their families by priests, Indian agents and police officers. It was against the law to hide or refuse children from going to the schools. Many parents would go to jail.

1928- The Sexual Sterilization Act is passed in the Alberta legislature, allowing any inmate of an Indian residential school to be involuntarily sterilized at the decision of the Principal, a church employee. At the minimum, 2800 aboriginal men and women will be made infertile under this law.

1931- There were 80 residential schools operating in Canada.

1948- There were 72 residential schools with 9,368 students.

- Despite a joint (House of Commons and Senate) committee recommendation that the schools be abolished, the schools kept going for 40 more years. By the 1970's when the Native Indian Brotherhood called for native control of education for native people, the federal government had begun to close down parts of the residential school system.

1979- There were 12 residential schools left with 1,899 students.

1980's- Residential school students began to disclose the sexual, mental, emotional and physical abuse they suffered at the schools.

1996- Despite the abuse allegations made over the previous 16 years it is this year that the last federally run residential school finally closes. The last school to close was the Gordon Residential school in Saskatchewan. The last maritime run residential school was Shubenacadie.

****over** 50,000 children died in the residential schools due to treatment and conditions there. Their deaths were not acknowledged, their bodies were never returned home for proper burials, nor were the massive graves sites marked for the parents of these children to visit and honor their children.

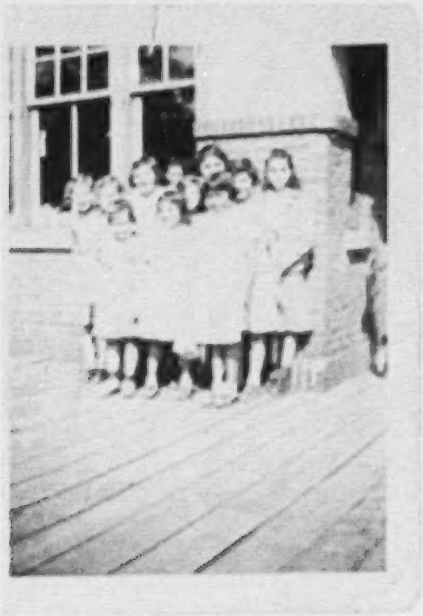
Source:
Bringing Tradition Home, BC Aboriginal Child Care Society, 2010.
Hidden No Longer: Genocide in Canada, Past and Present by Kevin D. Annett www.hiddennolonger.com

Shubenacadie Residential School

Approximately two thousand Mi'kmaq, Maliseet, Passamaquoddy, and others attended the Shubenacadie residential school over a period of thirty eight years from 1929-1967. Since this school was the only recognized Indian Residential east of Quebec, children came from all over the Atlantic and parts of Quebec.

The Shubenacadie Indian residential school opened in 1929 for the first time under the administration of Father Jeremiah Mackey. Its purpose was to train Mi'kmaw teenage males for manual training and agriculture, but the project failed. The school reopened the following year in 1930 with a new mandate to enroll Aboriginal children ranging in ages between seven and fifteen years. There have been several accounts of younger children attending the school. The Shubenacadie residential school was located in the town of Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia, 7 kilometers away from the Indian Brook Reserve. The school officially closed its doors in 1967. The building was demolished and burned in a controlled setting in 1989, and a manufacturing company for plastic pipes now occupies the site.

In addition to the survivors of the Shubenacadie Indian residential school, the Atlantic region has survivors from other recognized schools across Canada, non-recognized residential school students and a substantial population of Indian day school former students.



Source:
Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat
http://www.apcfnc.ca/en/community/indianresidentialschool.asp

PEI Day Schools

Prince Edward Island did not have a residential school however there were numerous day schools.

1. Rocky Point Day School

In September, 1914, RH Campbell, Superintendent of Education for PEI, began writing to Father John MacDonald, PEI's Indian Superintendent requesting something be done to educate the "Indian children" of Rocky Point. The children were unable to attend the so-called "white" schools in the area because, "the Indian children came from Tuberculous families in which ordinary cleanliness was not observed..." A year of letter writing between various government departments ensued, each unable or unwilling to rectify this situation. Residential schools were even mentioned, but as there were no such schools on PEI, and the children being too young to go away to school, the idea was dropped.

By the fall of 1915, a Mi'kmaq resident of Rocky Point, Alice Mitchell, took matters into her own hands. While voicing a complaint to Father MacDonald about the children "running wild and she cannot keep them under controle (sic) at all," Alice mentioned she would be willing to let the children attend school in her home. The school opened its doors to eight or nine children in mid-October, 1915, for a trial period, in the front parlor of Alice's home. The teacher, a local Mi'kmaq resident named Peter Scully, was referred to as a "very intelligent Indian...with a very fair education." Six months later, Peter resigned, as the location was not favorable to teaching. It was "...too small...people were talking and laughing in the kitchen...people were coming into the class room while class was in session and coming and going throughout the day."

In desperation, the local Mi'kmaq residents built a small building to house the school which opened in the fall of 1916 to eight or nine children. Matilda Labobe, a Lennox Island resident, was offered the position as teacher even though she was not a licensed teacher. She had a good, solid convent education and knew the language. Within weeks, disputes between the teacher and Peter Scully, forced the school to close. Matilda resigned and the school remained closed until the following year.

1917 brought about the hiring of Mary Agnes Mitchell. Miscouche convent educated, Mary Agnes taught until September, 1919, when the local residents began to complain about her. Various teachers came and went after this, with the school eventually closing on 30 June 1922, as the families with small children moved away from the reserve. It should be noted here that all the teachers at the Rocky Point Day School were from the Mi'kmaq community.

2. Lennox Island Day School

When the Lennox Island Day School opened its doors on 1868, Martin Francis, a Mi'kmaq resident of Lennox Island was its first teacher. Martin's education through the PEI school system was a good one, and by choosing this career path he became the first Mi'kmaq teach in the Maritimes. The first school was actually located in Martin's house and he initially agreed to teach for only six months, covering the basic skills of reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography and dictation.

A newspaper article in 1868 mentions a visit to Martin's school. The visitors were struck by the earnestness with which the students were intently studying their lessons, "The discernment of some of these Indian children is very acute; nor will they scruple to dispute their Teacher respecting the accuracy of some passages in their lessons..." Another Education report (1870) states, "...Martin Francis'...pupils are exceedingly apt, industrious and intelligent..."

By 1972, a request for a permanent schoolhouse was submitted but with Prince Edward Island in the midst of joining Confederation, a hold was put on the building of the new school house. Attendance was also an issue at the school, closing in 1873 and for most of 1874. A schoolhouse was finally built in 1875 but attendance was still down leaving the school to be open for only seven months one year and four and a half months later.

Despite his initial reluctance for a long-term commitment, Martin taught at the Lennox Island Day School for ten years. On 11 June, 1878, while teaching his class, he fell from his chair and was unable to move, possibly having a stroke. Marin died two days later.

Mr. John O. Arsenault, the new Indian Superintendent, moved his family to Lennox Island and took up the duties as school teacher on 1 October, 1878. Over the next eight years of John's teaching, the attendance rate was no more than fifty percent. He resigned as teacher in 1887 and Jerome LeClerq took over teaching duties. Some of Jerome's students went on to continue their education at Port Hill after leaving Lennox Island.

From 1891 to 1908, several teachers came and went from the Lennox Island Day School. While in 1998, a new 20' X 26" school house was built, which contained a classroom and vestibule. The fall of 1909 brought a controversial new teacher to the Day school- John J. Sark, son of then Chief John T. Sark. Well educated, John J attended St. Dunstan's Collage, obtaining his third class teacher's certificate. While his teaching credentials impressed the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) and the Indian Superintendent, his teach style caused some concern among the parents. He left in 1914, after his professionalism in his position was damaged due to negative reports sent to DIA. His younger brother, Jacob Sark then began teaching.

After returning from service in WWI, John J. began teaching again at the Lennox Island Day school. Things went well until 1924, when community members of Lennox Island requested he be removed from his position as school teacher because of his disciplinary actions against the children. DIA and the Indian Superintendent took his side and he resumed his duties as teacher. Things came to a head in 1938 due to a tuberculosis scare. This time the redidents of Lennox Island removed their children from the school and requested to put them in residential schools, in Nova Scotia. The Department acknowledged their reasons and approved the transfer of the students to the Residential school in Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia. That fall, the only students attending the Lennox Island School were John J. Sark's children. By Christmas the school was closed due to a low number of students.

1944-1945- The children returned from the Residential school. The Lennox Island School was re-opened for the children to resume their learning. The residents again requested a new teacher replace John Sark, but before any action could be done, he died. The next teacher was Raymond Sark, son of John Sark.

By 1948 a new school house was built. It included two classrooms, a craft room, nursing station, science room and a convent for the sister of St. Martha, who had taken over the teaching duties. Reverand E. W. MacInnis became the school principal and parish priest.

In 1981 the latest school was built and in memory of John J. Sark, the longest dedicated teacher who taught at the Lennox Island School. It is called John J. Sark Memorial School.

Source: Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI

The 60's Scoop

Before the mid-1960's, there was no organized way to provide child welfare services to Aboriginal people living on reserve. The 60's Scoop refers to the apprehension and adoption of First Nation and Metis children in Canada between the years 1960 and the mid 1980's. This phenomenon is so named because the highest numbers of adoptions took place in the decade of the 1960s and because, in many instances, children were literally scooped from their homes and communities without the knowledge or consent of families and bands. Many First Nations believed that in cases where consent was not given, government authorities and social workers acted under the generalized discriminatory assumption that Native people were culturally inferior and unable to adequately provide for the needs of their children. Many believe that as the residential schools began to show ineffectiveness, this became the new means that the government began to use to continue controlling Aboriginal people.

Statistics from the Department of Indian Affairs reveal a total of 11,132 'status Indian' children were adopted between the years 1960 and 1990. It is believed, however, that the actual numbers are much higher than this.

While the Department of Indian Affairs kept records of the number of adoptions of 'status Indian' children placed for adoption many were not recorded as 'status Indian' in adoption or foster care records. Of the children who were adopted, 70% of Aboriginal children were placed into non-Aboriginal homes. Interestingly, 70% of these adoptions broke down.

In most provinces, the child welfare agencies that were apprehending the children were not provided any culturally appropriate services. The Aboriginal culture was completely ignored for the Aboriginal children. Furthermore, there was no option for Aboriginal parents, families or communities to engage in any alternatives to apprehending and adoption of their Aboriginal children. A substantial portion of Aboriginal people who were adopted, face cultural and identity confusion issues as a result of having been socialized and acculturated into a Euro-Canadian society rather than their Aboriginal heritage.

Source:
Origins Canada: Supporting those separated by adoption www.originscanada.org/the-stolen-generation/
The Justice System and Aboriginal People: The Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission. Report including chapter on relationship to Child welfare www.ajic.mb.ca

BAND GOVERNANCE AND IDENTY

The Indian Act

The Indian Act is a piece of legislation that consolidated earlier colonial Acts dealing with First Nations people. It came into force in 1876. The primary goal of the act was to accomplish assimilation.

The Indian Act allows the government of Canada the right to control most aspects of Aboriginal people's lives. For example: Indian status, land, resources, wills, education, band administration etc.

The Act contains provisions that regulate membership, liquor prohibition, taxation, education, and land use. The Act provides for the uniform treatment of 'Indians' everywhere in Canada.

The Indian Act contains many stipulations for Aboriginal people. Some of those, such as the provision whereby an Aboriginal woman would lose her Status if she married a non-Aboriginal man, have had to be amended due to the fact that it offended the Charter.

The Act states that all status-Indians become wards of the federal government and are to be treated as minors without the full privileges of citizenship. Reserve land is placed in trust of the Crown and stated that this land cannot be mortgaged or seized for defaulted debts, nor could it be taxed. The reserve can only be sold with approval of a majority of the adult band members and only the Crown can purchase it.

To view the entire Indian Act, please go to: http://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/I-5/page-1.html.

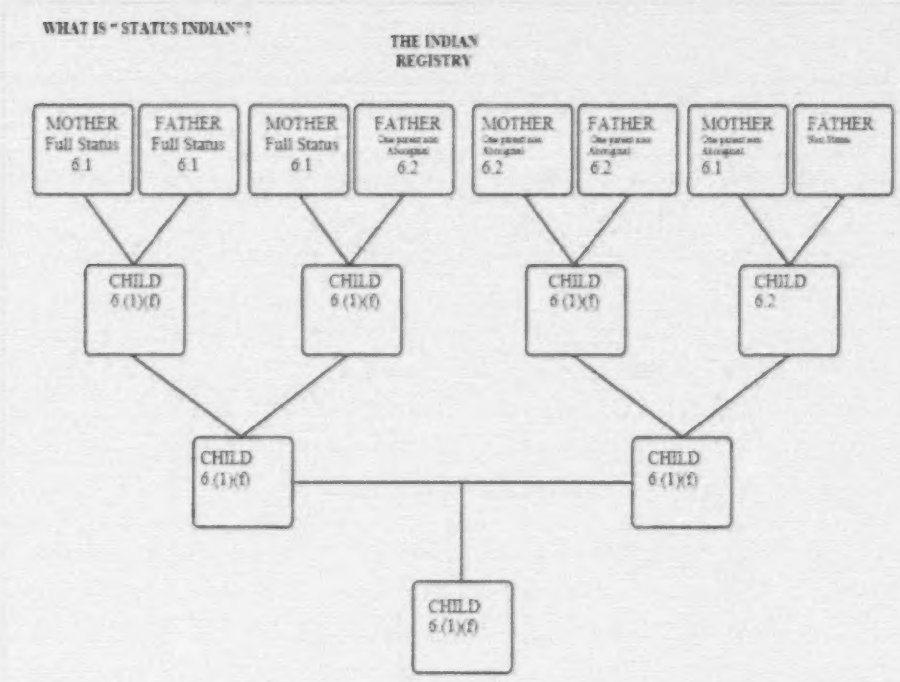
Bill C-31 completely changed the rules governing entitlement to Indian registration. Bill C-31, or a Bill to Amend the Indian Act, passed into law in April 1985 to bring the Indian Act into line with gender equality under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It proposed modifications to various sections of the Indian Act, including significant changes to Indian status and band membership, with three major goals: to address gender discrimination of the Indian Act, to restore Indian status to those who had been forcibly enfranchised due to previous discriminatory provisions, and to allow bands to control their own band membership as a step towards self-government. Since Bill C-31, individuals can qualify for Indian registration under one of two clauses contained in Section 6 of the Indian Act.

The two clauses of Section 6 are:

1. Section 6 (1), where both of the individual's parents are (or are entitled to be) registered,
2. Section 6 (2), where one of the individual's parents is (or is entitled to be) registered under Section 6(1) and the other parent is not registered.

The figure below illustrates the inheritance rules of Section 6 in relation to various parenting combinations involving Indians registered under Section 6(1) and 6(2) and non-Indians.

These rules imply that patterns of Indian/non-Indian parenting will greatly influence the future population entitled to Indian registration. Parenting between Indian and non-Indian over two successive generations, results in a loss of entitlement to Indian registration for children of the second generation.



Source:
Indegenous Foundations http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/government-policy/the-indian-act.html

Reserves

Land has been set aside for the use and benefit of the First Nation as a whole; individual First Nation members do not have a right of individual possession except by application of the *Indian*

*Act.** First Nation councils may enact residency by-laws that regulate on-reserve residency, but these by-laws cannot infringe on individual residency rights arising from the *Indian Act.*

While the majority of Registered Indians are members of a First Nation, it is important to note that not all Registered Indians are members of a First Nation. There are 250 First Nations in Canada that control their own membership. If an individual believes that they are a member of one of those 250 First Nations than they would have to apply directly to the First Nation for membership.

To learn more about reserve rights and responsibilities, contact your First Nation council or the Regional Director of Lands and Trust Services (LTS), AANDC.

Band Membership and Governance

Band Membership

Band membership in both the Lennox Island First Nation and the Abegweit First Nation (the two Mi'kmaq Governments on Prince Edward Island) is set out in a custom Membership Code. Membership is not strictly determined by the provisions of the Indian Act, but rather the custom and traditions of the individual Band. The provisions of the respective Membership Codes may be amended, but only with the consent of a certain percentage of Band members (Electors).

Governance

There are two Chiefs on Prince Edward Island: one for Lennox Island First Nation; and one for Abegweit First Nation.

Each Band has a Band council. Abegweit and Lennox Island are relatively small communities. Abegweit has one Chief and two Band councilors. Lennox Island has one Chief, two on reserve Band councilors and one off-reserve Band councilor.

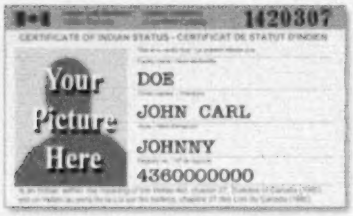
The members of the respective Bands on Prince Edward Island elect the Chiefs and Councilors. Elections are held every four years in Abegweit First Nation and every three years in Lennox Island First Nation.

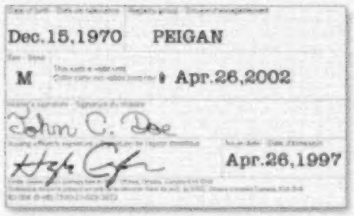
Source:
Don MacKenzie, Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI
Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca

Status

What is a status card?

A status card is an identification card that shows the registration number and band affiliation of a Native person with status under the terms and agreements of the Indian Act.





What is a Status Indian?

A status Indian is a person who is registered as an Indian under the Indian Act. The act sets out the requirements for determining who is an Indian for the purposes of the Indian Act.

What is Indian Status?

An Indian status is an individual's legal status as an Indian as defined by the Indian Act.

What is the Indian Act?

The Indian Act is the Canadian federal legislation passed in 1876, and amended several times since, which sets out certain federal government obligations and regulates the management of Indian reserve lands, Indian monies and other resources.

What is the Indian Register?

The Indian register is the official record identifying all registered Indians in Canada. Registered Indians are people who are registered with the federal government as Indians, under the Indian Act. Registered Indians are commonly referred to as status Indians because status Indians get more rights and benefits than those Indians who do not register. For example, status Indians may live on reserves, may receive education assistance and may be exempt from some federal, provincial and territorial taxes.

What defines the eligibility for Indian Status?

The Indian Act defines eligibility for Indian Status (Registered Indians). The Indian Register is the official record identifying all status Indians in Canada.

You are eligible for registration if:

1. You were entitled to registration prior to the changing of the Indian Act on April 17th, 1985.

2. You lost your Indian Status as a result of your marriage to a non-Indian man (s. 12 (1) (b)), including enfranchisement upon your marriage to a non-Indian man (s. 109 (2)).

3. Your mother and father's mother did not have status under the Indian Act, before their marriage and you lost your status at the age of 21 (s. 12 (1) (a) (iv))- referred to commonly as the double-mother rule).

4. Your registration was successfully protested on the grounds that your father did not have status under the Indian act, however your mother had status.

5. You lost your registration because you or your parents applied to give up registration and First Nation membership through the process known as "enfranchisement" or

6. You are a child of persons listed in 1 - 5 above.

You may be eligible for registration if only one of your parents is eligible to be registered under section 6 (1) of the Indian Act.

What Information do you need to apply?
You need an application form and supporting documents.

You can get an application form online at: http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca **or** in person at any AANDC (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada) regional office **or** from a First Nation office near you. For a list of AANDC Regional office locations visit http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca call 1-800-567-9604 **or** by mail by calling 1-800-567-9404 to request an application.

Supporting Documents:
Detailed documentation requirements are included on the application form(s), which are available at http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca
The following documentation is required to apply for registration:

1. Original birth certificate (listing parents names)
And if applicable:
2. Legal change of name document or marriage certificate, if the name you are applying for under is different from your birth certificate.
3. Custody Court Order
4. Statutory Declaration Form(s)

5. You will most likely need two passport style photographs

6. If over the age of 16, you should include a valid driver's license as well.

General Information:
You will be required to provide information about yourself, your parents, your grandparents including legal names, dates of birth, band name and registration numbers, contact information and adoption information(if relevant).

Signatures required:
Applicant (16 years of age or older)
Guardian (15 years or younger or a dependent adult)

How do I Apply?
1. In person at any Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada Regional office.
2. Drop off your completed application to any Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada regional office or First Nation office.
3. Mail your completed application with the required supporting documents to:

Office of the Indian Register
Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0H4

*A sample copy of the above documents are provided following this section.

Prince Edward Island applicants can contact:

1. Abegweit First Nation
1-902-676-2353.
A member from this Band is available to answer questions and issue status cards.

2. Lennox Island First Nation
1-902-831-2779.
A member from this Band is available to answer questions and issue status cards.

3. Native Council of Prince Edward Island
1-902-892-5314.

Source:
Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca

Non-Insured Health Benefits

Provinces and Territories are responsible for delivering health care services, guided by the provisions of the Canada Health Act. Health care services include insured hospital care and primary health care, such as physicians and other health professional services. Like any other resident, First Nations people and Inuit access these insured services through provincial and territorial governments.

However, there are a number of health-related goods and services that are not insured by Provinces and Territories or other private insurance plans. To support First Nations people and Inuit in reaching an overall health status that is comparable with other Canadians, Health Canada's **Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB)** Program provides coverage for a limited range of these goods and services when they are not insured elsewhere.

The Non-Insured Health Benefits Program is Health Canada's national, medically necessary health benefit program that provides coverage for benefit claims for a specified range of drugs, dental care, vision care, medical supplies and equipment, short-term crisis intervention mental health counseling and medical transportation for eligible First Nations people and Inuit people. Contact Health Canada at 1-866-225-0709 for more information regarding this program.

Source:
Health Canada – First Nations and Inuit Health www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/nihb-ssna/index-eng.php

Common Acronyms and Abbreviations

Organizations:

AAHRP- Atlantic Aboriginal Health Research Program
AANDC- Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada
ACOA- Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
AFN- Assembly of First Nations
AHTF- Aboriginal Health Transition Fund
APC- Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat
ASH- Aboriginal Survivors for Healing
CAP- Congress of Aboriginal Peoples
CMM- Confederacy of Mainland Micmacs
FNIH- First Nations and Inuit Health, Health Canada
MAWIW- Representative Organization of the three largest First Nations in New Brunswick: Elsipogtog,
MCPEI- Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI
MMHAB- Mi'kmaq Maliseet Health Aboriginal Health Board
NAHO- National Aboriginal Health Organization
NCPEI- Native Council of PEI
NMHAC- Native Mental Health Association of Canada
NNADAP- National Native Alcohol and Drug Program
NWAC- Native Women's Association of Canada
ORSAC- Outreach Residential School Atlantic Committee
RCMP- Royal Canadian Mounted Police
Tobique and Burnt Church. Word means "coming together"
UNBI- Union of New Brunswick Indians
UNSI- Union of Nova Scotia Indians

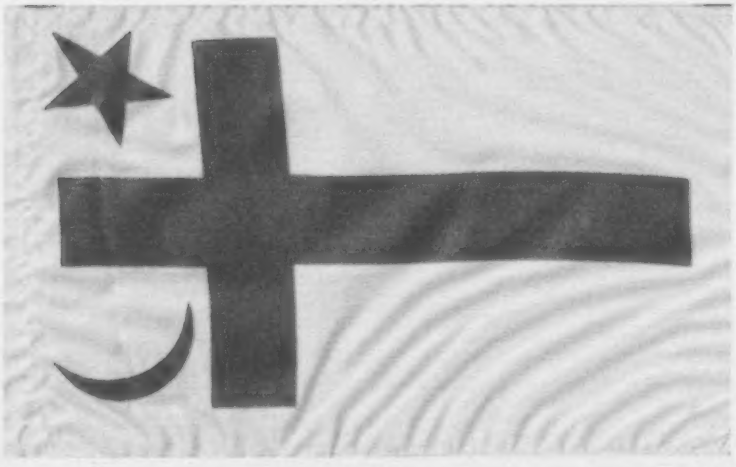
Abbreviations:

CEP- Common Experience payment (IRS)
IAP- Independent Assessment Process (IRS)
IRS- Indian Residential School
TRC- Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Mi'kmaq Flags

Mi'kmaq Nation Flag

Commonly referred to as the Santee Mawioomi flag or the Grand Council flag.
The meaning of the Mi'kmaq Nation Flag:
Wapeek (White) - Denotes the purity of Creation
Mekweek Klujjewey (Red Cross) – Represents mankind and infinity (four directions)
Naakuuset (Sun) – Forces of the day
Tepkunaset (Moon) – Forces of the night



Mi'kmaq National Flag

The Mikmaq National Flag has three colors, white, red, and blue, signifying the three divine persons, The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit. The cross signifies Christ who was crucified on the Crosss.

The letters: N,A, M, T are very significant

N – Nin (I or Me)

A – Alasotmoinoi (being a Catholic)

M – Mento (gisna gil mention (devil))

T – Too ot Tooa (get out – go out)

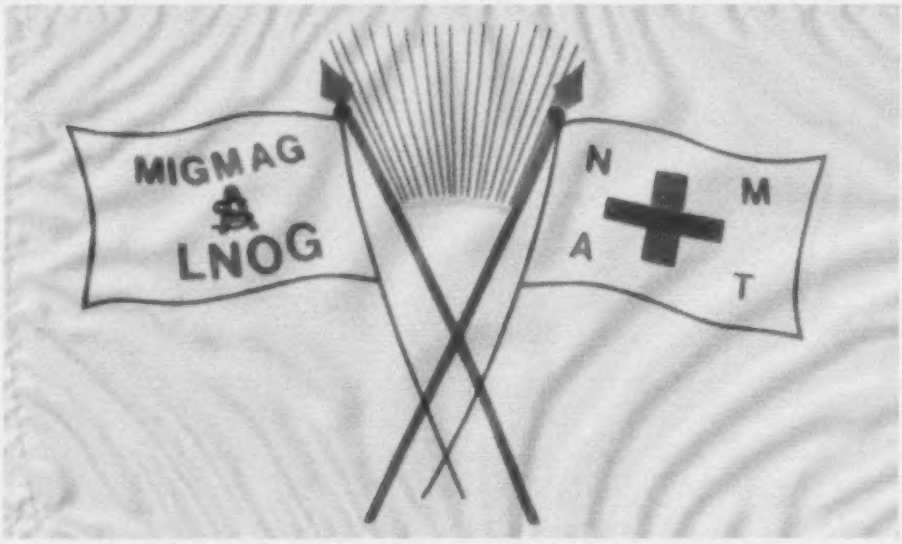
Nin Alasotmoinoi gil Mento Tooe (I am a Catholic, you are a devil, get out)

SA – means Saint Anne (Patron Saint of the Mikmaq since 1730

MIGMAG – Miikmaq (The Allies)

LNOG – L'nuuk (The People)

The flag was first raised in Listukujk (Listuguj, P.Q.) on October 4, 1900 and in Kjipuktuk (Halifx, N.S.) in 1901



Source: Daniel N. Paul "We Were Not the Savages" http://www.danielnpaul.com/Mi'kmaqFlags.html

Mi'kmaq Calendar

Important Dates to Remember:

January 6th
Eleke'wia'timk - Old Christmas

June 21st
National Aboriginal Day

July 26th
St. Anne's Mi'kmaq Holiday
The celebrations can be on different days, but this is the actual holiday date.

October 1st
Mi'kmaq Treaty Day

October
Mi'kmaq History Month

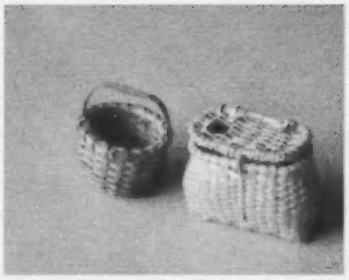
November 11th
Remembrance Day, is referred to as *Sma'knis Na'kwekm* – Warriors/Soldiers Day.

Mi'kmaq Lunar Calendar:

Season	English Month	Mi'kmaq Month	Translation
	January	Punamujuikús	Frost fish (tom cod) month
	February	Apunknajit	The snow blinder
	March	Siwkewikús	Spawning moon
Siwkw (Spring)	April	Penamuikús	Egg laying moon
Nipk (Summer)	May	Etquljuikús	Frog-croaking moon
	June	Nipnikús	Summer moon
	July	Peskewikús	Feather shedding moon
	August	Kisikwekewikús	Fruit and Berry ripening moon
	September	Wikumkewikús	Moose calling moon
Toqa'q (Autumn)	October	Wikewikús	Animal fattening moon
Kesik (Winter)	November	Keptekewikús	River freezing moon
	December	Kiskewikús	The Great month

Source:
Mi'kmaq Calendars http://www.bigorrin.org/archive96.htm
Mi'kmaq Daily Life – Semi-Nomadic Lifestyle http://wwwmuiniskw.org/pgCulture1a.htm

Mi'kmaq Creations



Wigwams are the traditional homes of the Mi'kmaq. The Mi'kmaq word is 'wikuom'. One family lived in each wigwam but it was not uncommon for close relatives to share wigwams. They could be big enough to hold 15 people and if needed, they could be long enough to house more than one family and hold two fire pits. They were made from birch bark, spruce trees and roots. They could be decorated with pictures of animals and birds.

Mi'kmaq people are traditionally very good creating and building with birch and other types of wood/bark/plants. Beautiful hand crafted baskets are made out of black ash, birch and other materials. There are many different designs and kinds of baskets. The use of the basket will determine the design and what it will be made from. For example, a trinket box would be more decorative and less stable than a fish basket.

The Mi'kmaq are very skilled and innovative. Birch bark canoes were mastered by the Mi'kmaq people. Snowshoes were made and used when hunting large animals. Snowshoes make it easier to get across large surfaces very quickly. The Mi'kmaq people also created sleds. The word 'toboggan' (tabaqn) is the Mi'kmaq translation for the English word 'sled'. Mi'kmaq artists are famous for their porcupine quill work. Quills are softened and beaded through baskets and clothing for decoration and sometimes for protection.

Source:
Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI: Mi'kmaq on Epekwitk
Facts for Kids http://www.bigorrin.org/mikmaq_kids.htm
Nova Scotia Museums http://museum.gov.ns.ca/arch/infos/mikmaq1.htm

Interesting Facts

Mi'kmaq people call Prince Edward Island 'Epekwitk'.

The name Canada comes from 'Kanata', an Iroquois word that means village.

Well before the coming of European settlers, Canada's Aboriginal people had discovered maple sap, which they gathered every spring. According to many historians, the maple leaf began to serve as a Canadian symbol as early as 1700.

Lawn darts was created by Aboriginal people by using chucked green corn with its kernels removed.

Lacrosse, which the Native People of North America knew under many different names such as Baggataway or Tewaarathon, played a significant role in the community and religious life of tribes across the continent for untold years. Its origin lost in the antiquity of myth, Lacrosse remains a notable contribution of the Native culture to modern Canadian society. Native Lacrosse was characterized by a deeply spiritual involvement, and those who took part did so with dedicated spirit and with the highest ideals of bringing glory to themselves and their tribes, and honour to the participants and the tribes to which they belonged.

Pine trees were used by first nations to make a tea that helped relieve coughs. Many cough syrups continue to include this in the ingredients today.

Willow bark is an active ingredient in pain killers, such as aspirin. It was known and used by Aboriginal people for thousands of years.

Spruce gum, collected from spruce trees, was the first chewing gum collected by Aboriginal people.

Corn is a staple food that was cultivated by Aboriginal people for thousands of years.

There is no word for good-bye in Mi'kmaq. There is a term that informally translated is, "Be seeing you again". *Ne'multes.*

Lactose intolerance has a 95% prevalence rate among Aboriginal people who are of 50% or more Aboriginal.

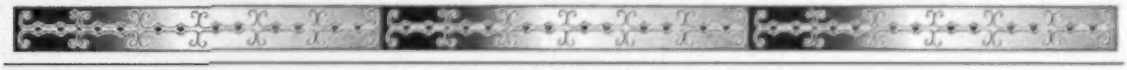
25% of individuals who live on reserve, and are over the age of 45, have diabetes.

There are approximately 1,100 Mi'kmaq people on Prince Edward Island.

Near Mount Stewart there is a 'holy spring' area where Mi'kmaq and non-Aboriginal people go for healing and prayer.

Additional Resources

Name/Info	Web Address
Abegweit First Nation (Prince Edward Island Reserve)	http://www.abegweitfirstnations.com/
Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada	http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca
Aboriginal Canada Portal (Lists Aboriginal Organizations all over Canada and web sites/contact Information)	www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca
Aboriginal Children: The Healing Power of Cultural Identity	http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/dca-dea/prog-ini/ahsunc-papacun/aboriginal-autochtones-eng.php
Aboriginal Healing Foundation	www.ahf.ca
Aboriginal Human Resource Council	http://www.aboriginalhr.ca/en/home
Assembly of First Nations	www.afn.ca
Building Aboriginal Language	www.nwt.literacy.ca/resources/aborig/build-ab-lang-
Canadian Funded Health Programs for Aboriginal People (Children and Youth Section)	http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/finance/agree-accord/prog/index-eng.php
Centre for Indigenous Peoples' Nutrition and Environment	http://www.mcgill.ca/cine/
Congress of Aboriginal Peoples	http://www.abo-peoples.org/
First Nations, Inuit and Aboriginal Health	http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/nihb-ssna/benefit-prestation/index-eng.php

Fredericton Native Friendship Center	http://www.fcfcnb.ca
How To Kit: Culture and Traditions Helps parents support their children in traditional language learning and activities	www.nald.ca/library/learning/howtokit/culture/cover.htm
Indigenous Food Systems Network	http://www.indigenousfoodsystems.org/
Lennox Island First Nation (Prince Edward Island Reserve)	http://www.lennoxisland.com/lennoxcommunity/index.html
Metis Culture and Heritage Resource Center	http://www.metisresourcecentre.mb.ca/
Metis National Council	http://www.metisnation.ca/
Mi'kmaq Confederacy of Prince Edward Island	http://www.mcpei.ca/
Mi'kmaq Cultural web site	http://www.muiniskw.org/
Mi'kmaq Family Resource Center	http://www.mikmaqfamilyresources.ca/
Mi'kmaq online (A dictionary, stories, songs and more all in Mi'kmaq language with translations and audio/visual applications)	http://www.mikmaqonline.org/default.html
Mi'kmaq Resource Center (Cape Breton University)	http://mrc.uccb.cs.ca/
Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative	http://www.mikmaqrights.com
Mi'kmaq Talking Posters (Great tool for learning the language)	http://www.firstnationhelp.com/ali/posters/
National Aboriginal Health Organization	www.naho.ca

National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program (Info. For Youth Programs)	http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/substan/ads/nnadap-pnlaada_dir-rep-eng.php
Native Council of Nova Scotia	http://ncns.ca/
Native Council of Prince Edward Island	www.ncpei.com
Native Reflections Catalogue	http://www.nativereflections.com/products.php
Native Web	http://www.nativeweb.org/
New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council	http://www.nbapc.org/
Ni'n na L'nu The Mi'kmaq of Prince Edward Island	By A.J.B Johnston and Jesse Francis
Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Language Center of Excellence	http://kinu.ns.ca/excellence/index.html
Skills at Home: Tips for Parents	www.skills/tips-parents-build-ab-lang-skills.pdf
The Healthy Aboriginal	http://www.thehealthyaboriginal.net/
Where are the Children? Healing the Legacy of Residential Schools	www.wherearethechildren.ca
Web Media: Used for continued learning.	Caught Between Two Cultures: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ORog_-2ovz8